

STATES PEOPLES' CONFERENCE NEW SERIES No. 6

BIKANER

SARANGADHAR DAS

*A Report submitted to the President, All India States
Peoples' Conference.*

by
Sarangadhar Das

Published by K. B. Menon, Office-Secretary, All India States
Peoples' Conference, 138, Meadows Street, Fort, Bombay.

PREFACE

The political and economic condition of the people of the Indian States is a field which has hitherto not been touched. A systematic and objective study of these problems in some of the typical States is necessary in order to determine their proper place in the Indian polity. I am thankful to Sri Jawaharlal Nehru, President, All India States Peoples' Conference for this opportunity of looking into some of the Rajputana States. This is a fascinating subject, of live interest not only to the people of the States, but also to those of the provinces. And in following the political relations of the ruler of Bikaner with the Government of India, I have been fortunate in having access to certain Hindi and English publications hitherto unknown to the public. I have presented profuse extracts from these publications, which, I trust, will provoke workers to further research into the concepts of sovereignty and paramountcy.

In this study I have always relied on publications and court records, which amply corroborate and strengthen the statements submitted to me by persons in Bikaner. The view taken by me of every aspect of the administration of the State is purely pragmatic; and it is hoped that the constantly deteriorating condition of the people will evoke in every patriotic citizen of India a lively interest in what the rulers and the people are doing in the States.

My sincere thanks are due to the numerous friends in Bikaner and outside who have rendered every assistance to me in this work, and specially

to the group of refugees from Bikaner who confided their tale of woes to me in the hope that I shall make it known to the outside world.

I tender my thanks to Dr. K. B. Menon for his many valuable suggestions, and to him as well as to Sri Krishna Sharma for correcting a good deal of the proofs.

Bombay,

December, 17, 1940.

SARANGADHAR DAS.

ERRATA

Page	Line	For	Read
35	14	Ruler."	Ruler."\$
48	20	League of	League of Nations
48	27	necessary while	Necessary. While
55	18	3,57,000	3,37,000
61	2	page 81	Pages 107-108
62	18 & 19		Transpose the lines
104	17	is	are
119		Inside large rectangle.	Large seal of the Governor- General

ATA 15

CONTENTS

Chapter	PAGE
I. General and Historical	1
II. Political Relations with the British ..	13
III. Administration	36
IV. Civil Liberties	41
V. The Budget	54
VI. Representative Institutions ..	82
VII. National-building Work	88
VIII. Pattadar System	97
IX. System of Land Tenure	102
X. Economic Condition of the People ..	105
XI. Conclusion	109

APPENDIX

A. Treaty between the East India Company and the Raja of Bikaner —1818	116
B. Political Agent's confidential D.O. of the 7th December, 1905 to Maharaja Ganga Singh	120
C. Maharaja Ganga Singh's private letter of the 18th December, 1899 to the Political Agent, Bikaner ..	123
D. Political Agent's letter of the 19th December, 1899 to Maharaja Ganga Singh	126
E. Memorial of the people of patta Mahajan to the Maharaja of Bikaner	129
Bibliography	132

CHAPTER I

GENERAL AND HISTORICAL

General

Bikaner is one of the most important States in Rajputana, and its ruler, of late years, has figured considerably in the political horizon of India. It is bound by the treaty of 1818 to subordinate co-operation with the Government of India, and since 1920 has been placed in direct relations with the Agent to the Governor-General (since 1937 Resident for) Rajputana. It is a Salute State, the ruler being entitled to a permanent salute of 17 guns and a personal one of 19 guns.

Bikaner lies between latitudes $27^{\circ}12'$ and $30^{\circ}12'$ and longitudes 72.15 and $75^{\circ}50'$ and is bounded on the north by the Punjab districts of Ferozpur and Hissar, on the east by Jaipur State, on the south by Jodhpur State, and on the west by Bahawalpur and Jaisalmer States. A portion of Bahawalpur territory also adjoins the north-west of the State. It has an area of 23,317 sq. miles, being second to Jodhpur in Rajputana, and the seventh largest State in India. Bikaner covers more than one-sixth of Rajputana and Ajmer-Merwara combined, is twice as big as Belgium, almost twice the size of Holland, and one and one-half times as big as Switzerland.

According to 1931 Census the population is 9,36,218. The composition of the population according to religion is as follows:

Hindu	—	77 45%
Muslim	—	15 09%
Jain	—	3 07%
Sikh		4 32%
Others		0 07%
		<hr/>
Total		100 00

The Jats who were the original occupants of the land before Rajput invasion and now follow mainly agriculture constitute 23% of the population Chamars Bhangis and other depressed classes come to about 13%

Physical Features

The Aravalli mountains running north east and south west divide the territories known as Rajputana into two nearly equal parts and form a great natural barrier between the rolling sands of the desert in the west and the relatively more fertile plains and higher plateau to the east and south Bikaner Jaisalmer Jodhpur and the Shekhawati section of Jaipur are situated in the desert region in the west Bikaner has many fertile districts but a good deal of the country is covered with sand hills with occasional rocky ridges which make it look desolate It is remarkable how these sands respond to water, and with a good monsoon there are prolific crops of *jowar* and *bajra* and these grown in Rajputana soil are considered to be more nutritious than wheat Bikaner is also famous for its water-melons and a plant called *fog* used to season curries But with the failure of rains nothing grows and there is extreme scarcity to be faced by man and beast

There are a few hills but not exceeding 500 feet in height These are stony and absolutely

bare. There are no perennial rivers, but only a few streams which fill up in the rains and lose themselves in the sand.

Natural Resources

Forests, there are none, except a few scrub jungles near Gajner and Chhappar, which are game sanctuaries preserved for the benefit of the Maharaja and his guests. *Khejri*, *Jal*, *Kikar* and *Ber* are some of the trees found in the desert. They are not of much use as timber, but only a poor source for fuel, and the leaves are relished by camels and horned animals. *Peepul*, *Neem* and *Sheesham* are met with but rarely, and on the banks of the canals. Grasses known as *Lapri*, *Bur* and *Bhurt* grow abundantly all over the State after a few inches of rain. Better kinds of grass called *Siwan* and *Dhaman* grow in Suratgarh and Hanumangarh Tahsils. These are nature's fodder for cattle, and the cattle wealth of the State and throughout this desert country is considerable.

The minerals found in the State are, lignite coal, gypsum, Fuller's earth or multani mitti, red sandstone and copper. The colliery at Palana is now being exploited by the State; and the brown coal mixed with Bengal coal is used by the Bikaner State Railway. Fuller's earth is mined under a contract system and exported. The red sandstone is used for building purposes. And copper was mined at Dariba over a hundred years ago, but proved commercially unsuccessful. Another attempt was made ten years ago, but the result is not known, as there is no mention of it in the Administration Report for 1935-36.

The Salt lakes at Chhappar and Lunkaransar were at one time famous, and there used to be an

annual production of 30,000 maunds of salt from the latter lake under an agreement entered into with the Government of India in 1879. However, later in 1913 this was discontinued for the convenience of the Government; and, the requirements of the people now come from Sambhar, Pachbhadra and Didwana, Government Salt factories in Jaipur and Jodhpur, the State receiving a compensation for the loss of revenue. The stoppage of manufacture from the Bikaner lakes deprived the people of a large source of their income

Domestic Animals

Cattle, sheep, goats and camels are the only ones, and their numbers are given below according to the cattle census of 1929-30.*

			Head
Cows	..	..	3,36,562
Calves	..	..	2,11,888
Bullocks	..	..	1,27,237
Sheep	.	.	9,63,838
Goats	..	..	3,00,048
Camels	..	..	1,27,463
Total			20,67,036

It is estimated from various reports that during the last three years of scarcity of fodder and water, over 85% of the cattle have died, that is, about 17,57,000 head.

Both camels and bullocks are used as draught animals, but the former being more suitable for the sandy soil, the latter are generally used for carts and for the plough in the canal areas. A

* Census of India, 1931, Vol. I, Bikaner State, Part I Report published 1934. Page 146.

considerable number of he-calves and steers is therefore exported. The cattle constiute an important source of income to the villagers who sell their *ghce*, surplus stock of animals, and sheep's and camel's wool.

Drinking Water

The wells are very deep, between 200 and 300 feet. Sweet water is extremely rare, the water from the majority of the wells throughout the State being brackish. The average rainfall is ten to twelve inches, and the rain water stored in the ponds and *baolis* (reservoirs), which is used for drinking and cooking, is generally exhausted in about four months' time. The scarcity of drinking water in the villages during the summer months is very severe. The conditions in the Gang canal area in the north, however, are far better owing to the canal water.

The State has attempted boring an artesian well near the Power House in Bikaner city. The bore in two years ending July, 1936 had gone down to 2,010 feet, when the drilling stem broke. "Efforts to remove the under-reamer from the bore hole were continued during the year".* Nothing is known since then, as the State has not published administration reports for the subsequent years. It is stated in the Report for 1935-36 that the expenditure for the year was Rs. 28,797-11-0; and as the first 1,700 feet had been bored during the previous year, probably a total sum of Rs. 50,000 was spent on the job. Although the expenditure may seem high, it is a laudable experiment; and the experience gained will prove valuable in future operations. Success in artesian boring would change the face of Rajputana.

* Report on the Administration of the Bikaner State for 1935-36, Page 27.

, HISTORICAL SURVEY ,

Origin of the State

Tod writing his famous history of Rajasthan in 1832 says, Bikaner holds a secondary rank amongst the principalities of Rajputana. It is an offset of Marwar, its princes being scions of the house of Jodha, who established themselves by conquest on the northern frontier of the parent State and its position, in the heart of the desert, has contributed to the maintenance of their independence".

When Rao Jodha removed his capital from Mandore to Jodhpur in 1459 A.D. one of his sons, Beeka guided by his uncle, Kandhal, started out to extend the territories of the Rathores into the sandy country northwards. He won his first success by the wholesale massacre of the Sanklas of Jangloo. He then came in contact with the Bhattis of Pugal, whose chief gave his daughter in marriage to Beeka, and the latter established his headquarters at Korumdesir.

✓ Jats' Voluntary Conferment of Supremacy

There were many settlements of the Jits or Getes or Jats as they are known in modern times. They were the original settlers of this land and had established themselves for ages, not only in this area, but all over Rajputana. The Jats were an intensely liberty loving and pastoral people, and governed themselves by their own village republics with the patriarch at the head. The massacre of the Sanklas of Jangloo was enough to convince them of the superior killing power possessed by the avaricious Rajputs, and the elders

of the first two settlements, Sheksir and Roneah, started negotiations with Beeka. They put down three conditions, the third being, "To hold the rights and privileges of the community inviolable." These terms were accepted, and the Jats relinquished to Beeka and his descendants the supreme power over their territories; assigning to him, in perpetuity, the power to levy *dhooa*, or a 'hearth-tax' of one rupee on each house in the canton, and a land tax of two rupees on each hundred bighas of cultivated land within their limits. In order to allay their apprehension that their rights may be encroached upon, "the Rajput chief replied that, in order to dissipate their fears on this head, as well as to perpetuate the remembrance of the supremacy thus voluntarily conferred he would solemnly bind himself and his successors to receive the tika of inauguration from the hands of the descendants of the elders of Sheksir and Roneah, and that the *gadi* should be deemed vacant until such rites were administered."*

To quote this famous author further on this most interesting episode, "In this simple transfer of the allegiance of this pastoral people we mark that instinctive love of liberty which accompanied the Gete in all places and all conditions of society, whether on the banks of the Oxus and Jaxartes, or in the sandy desert of India; and although his political independence is now annihilated, he is still ready even to shed his blood if the Rajpoot master dare to infringe his inalienable right to his *bapota*, his paternal acres."†

* Loc. cit. p. 1,013.

† A recent case in point is the agrarian rising of 1934-35 in the Shekhavati Thikanas in Jaipur, where the Thikanedars tried to eject the Jats from their holdings. One was killed and several wounded, but the Jats remained on their lands.

In combination with these Jats, Beeka conquered the eleven hundred villages of the Johyas, extending over the northern end of the desert even to the Sutlej. The Johyas had withstood the invaders for a long time, but had to succumb to Rathore domination, when "treason had done its worst by the murder of their elder, and the consequent possession of Bhuropal, the place of residence of the patriarchal head" Bhagore was wrested from the Bhattis, who had originally taken it away from the Jats.

Founding of Bikaner

In Bhagore district Beeka founded his capital Bikaner in 1489 A D after thirty years of constant warfare and conquest since he left his parental roof at Mandore. "The spot which he selected for his capital, was the birth right of a Jit, who would only concede it for this purpose on the condition that his name should be linked in perpetuity with its surrender. Nira or Nera was the name of the proprietor, which Beeka added to his own, thus composing that of the future capital, Beekaneer." Perhaps at this stage he called himself Rao, and claimed Bikaner independent of Jodhpur.

Kandhal's Conquests

Beeka was now firmly established, and his uncle, Kandhal, to whose daring and enterprise the former was indebted for his successes, departed with his immediate kin, and conquered the territories of the communities of Aslagh, Beniwal and Sarun. These districts are still in the possession of his descendants, known as Kandhalot Rathors. And although they form an integral portion of the Bikaner State, they evince, in their indepen-

* Tod's Rajasthan, P. 1014

dent bearing to its chief, that their estates were the gift of their own swords, not of his patents; and they ever lent a reluctant and nominal obedience to his authority. Whenever necessity, or avarice imposes a demand for tribute, it is often met by a flat refusal, accompanied by such a comment as this: "Who made this Raja? Was it not our own ancestor, Kandhal? Who is he, who presumes to levy tribute from us?"

Kandhal's career of conquest, however, was cut short by the Delhi Emperor's lieutenant in Hissar; he was slain, while he was attempting to storm this important fortress. This is the first time that these Rathors came in contact with a force superior to theirs, and had to own defeat in their conquering expedition.

Beeka died in 1495 A.D. leaving two sons, Lunkaran and Gharsi. The former succeeded Beeka, and made several conquests from the Bhattis in the west. Gharsi founded Gharsisar and Ursisar. His stock is known by the style of Bika Gharsisots, and the descendants are the Tazimi Thakurs of Gharsisar and of Garabdesar.

Pattadar of Mahajan

Lunkaran's eldest son, Ratan Singh, desiring a separate establishment in his lifetime, renounced his right of primogeniture in favour of his brother, Jaitsi, for the "fief of Mahajan and one hundred and forty villages." His descendants go by the name of Bika Ratansinghots and are the Tazimi Thakurs of Mahajan and Kumbhana. More will be known later about the Patta of Mahajan, but it is interesting to note here how these areas have been deserted since they came under Rajput domination. According to the

researches made by Tod, as quoted above, the fief of Mahajan consisted of one hundred and forty villages in the first quarter of the 16th century, while before the completion of four centuries of their rule, that is, towards the end of the 19th century, it dwindled down to sixty-three villages, fifty-four being in the Patta of Mahajan, and nine in that of Kumbhana .

Further Conquests

Rao Jait, the third son of Lunkaran succeeded to the gadi in 1513 and wrested the district of Narnote from some independent Grassia chiefs. He also compelled the sons of Beeda, the first Rathor colonists in this region, to acknowledge his supremacy by an annual tribute besides certain taxes. Beeda's successors are called Bidawats, who were the most powerful in the early period of British rule. The Chief of Bikaner was obliged to be satisfied with almost nominal marks of supremacy, and to restrict his demands, which were elsewhere unlimited. They are now the Thakurs of Bidasar.

MUGHAL PERIOD

Rao Rae Sing's Surrender to Akbar

Rae Sing succeeded his father Kalyan Sing in 1573. The Jats had so long been enjoying political power equally with the Rajputs in accordance with the solemn promise given by Beeka to the elders of the Sheksir and Roneah. But, the Rajput population was growing abundant, and had to be provided for. Rae Sing,

* Physical and Political Geography of Bikaner with historical notes by Rai Bahadur Sodhi Hukm Singh, Vice President of the Regency Council of Bikaner. Published 1894. Pp viii and x Appendix B.

Rai Sing, prior to his submission to the Mughal Emperor, had conquered territories in Gujerat, also. Sohanlal quotes on pages 129 and 130 of his work, the Emperor's firman from the Ferishta, and says that on Rae Singh's tendering allegiance to the Emperor, the latter acknowledged him as a feudatory chief and leader of four thousand horse, conferred on him the title of Raja, and granted the following territories including his own conquered Parganas:

Suba.	Pargana.	Total Income Rs.		
Bikaner—	Bikaner	..	..	32,50,000
	Batnud	..	..	6,40,000
Hissar—	Baranthai	..	..	9,80,032
	Sidhmukh	..	..	72,152
Ajmer—	Dronapur	..	..	7,81,386
	Bhatner	..	..	9,32,742
Bhatner—	Maroth	..	..	2,80,000
Surat Govern- ment—	Junagarh and 47			
	other Parganas	..	..	3,32,69,962
Total in five Subas—55 Parganas.				4,02,06,274

Bikaner was therefore no longer an independent kingdom, but a grant from the Paramount Power of the day to the Rajput chief in return for services he was required to render as a leader of four thousand horse to the Emperor in times of war. These vassals, as for example, Bikaner, Jodhpur, Bharatpur, and the predecessors of the present-day large zamindars of Bengal "were

called Zemindars by the Mogul Government down to the latest period, and we know from history the nature of their tenures. They were bound to attend in succession on the person of the Emperor at the head of a fixed quota of troops. Their own countries were and are still sub-divided into the lands of the military retainers or Thakurs, and the revenue lands, on the same principle that prevailed under the Hindu government in the Empire at large." * This position of being a vassal State is further evidenced from the cases of succession cited below.

Raja Rai Singh however distinguished himself in all the wars of Akbar, and his assault of the fort at Ahmedabad, where he slayed the Governor Mirza Mohamed Hussein in single combat, and his services for the Imperial Government in the Nagore, Attock and Deccan campaigns are famous. However, he did not accomplish these feats of valour as the independent sovereign of Bikaner, but only as a servant of the crown. The shrewd Akbar always appreciated the value of such valorous subjects, and strengthened the bond that already existed between the crown and the Rathors, by securing for Prince Selim (Jehangir) Rai Singh's daughter as wife.

Raja Rai Singh's brother, Ram Singh conquered the Bhatner district from the Bhattis, originally Jits of Yadu descent, but who assumed this name on becoming proselytes to Islam. Bhatner had

* An account (Geographical, Statistical and Historical) of Orissa proper or Cuttack with Appendices, by A Stirling, Secretary to the Commissioner, Cuttack, published 1822. Reprinted by Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta 1904. The author had access to many Revenue Accounts of the Mughal period and to the original AIN AKBARI.

changed hands several times. Once during Rao Kalyan Sing's reign, it was taken away by the Emperor of Delhi after killing Kalyan Sing's brother, whereupon Bagh Sing, nephew of the latter went to Delhi and received it as a grant.

Raj Sing at the same time brought the Johyas under complete subjection. These people had just previously tried to regain their independence. Later, Ram Singh defeated the Pooneas Jats, who were the last to have preserved their ancient liberty. Rajputs were inducted into the Jats' most valuable possessions. But the conqueror paid the penalty. He was slain in their expiring efforts to shake off the yoke of the stranger; and though the Ramsingotes added to the numerical strength, and enlarged the territory of Bika, they like the Kandulotes, little increased the power of the State to which their obedience was nominal. Seedmook and Sankoo were the two chief places of the Ramsingotes.

Jats Disappear from the Political Arena.

Thus, on the subjugation of the Poona Jats—the six Jat communities, who had settled in this desert for ages as independent units, were politically annihilated. Since then they have occupied themselves with agriculture and with their old pastoral pursuits, and are the best husbandmen in the country. As Tod says in 1832, "They are an industrious tax-paying race under their indolent Rajpoot masters." This is more true today than it was even then. Just the same they have remained a straightforward and self-respecting race of men and women, with a spirit of independence of which any country may well be proud.

* Tod's Rajasthan, P. 177.

Right of Succession to the Gadi in the Hands of the Emperor

Dalpat Singh succeeded his father, Raja Rai Singh in 1611, but was not recognised by the Emperor of Delhi, who sent 50,000 troops under Nawab Zubde Khan to place another brother, Sur Singh on the gadi. After some fighting this was done, and Sur Singh was made Raja, while Dalpat Singh was confined in Ajmer Fort.*

Raja Karan Singh ruled from 1631 to 1669, and "served with distinction in the Deccan and received the grant of the village Jawri from the Imperial Court of Delhi."† But, later, Emperor Aurangzeb was displeased with his conduct at Attock, and summoned "Karan Singh to Delhi with a view to punish him, but forgave his conduct through the intercession of his sons Padam Singh and Kesari Singh, who had so bravely fought in his cause." Since Rai Singh every Raja was in the Emperor's service, mostly in the Deccan, while their own territories dwindled from fifty-five Parganas to thirteen after Rai Singh's death ‡

Bikaner Granted to an Illegitimate Son

After Karan Singh's death, the Emperor granted the State to Banamali Das, an illegitimate son of the deceased. He ruled for some time, but was somehow poisoned, and then the

* Sodhi, Hukm Singh's Physical and Political Geography, P. 64

† Ibid. P. 65.

‡ Ibid. P. 66.

Also: History of Bikaner in Hindi by Sohan Lal, Additional Member Regency Council and Revenue Officer, State Bikaner, Published 1894.

legitimate son, Anup Singh' was recognised as the Raja. For his services in the Deccan, the Emperor conferred on him the title of Maharaja.

Feuds between Jodhpur and Bikaner were frequent and these ended always in reconciliation. The powerful Thakurs were ever in rebellion, and co-operating with the enemies of the house of Bikaner. Territories were constantly changing hands. But the house of Bikaner always remained subservient to the Emperor of Delhi. The position of the State in the heart of the desert saved it from the Mahrattas, and so it never paid any tribute to them.

General Condition in Early Nineteenth Century

Maharaja Surat Singh ruled from 1788 to 1828, during the period of British ascendancy and was always having either conquering expeditions or defensive operations. The cost of these operations was weighing heavy on the people; who were deserting villages.. This, as well as the previous reigns, can be well understood from the words of an impartial historian like Tod. Writing about Bikaner, he says ". . . Its present condition bears little comparison with what tradition reports it to have been in ancient times; and its deterioration, within three centuries since the Rajpoots supplanted the Jits, almost warrants our believing the assertion, that these deserts were once fertile and populous; nay, that they are still capable (notwithstanding the reported continued increase of the sand) to maintain an abundant population, there is little room to doubt. The princes of Bikaner used to take the field at the head of ten thousand of their kindred retainers; and although they had extraordinary grants from the empire for the maintenance of

these contingents, their ability to do so from their proper resources was undoubted. To other causes than positive sterility must be attributed the wretched condition of this State. Exposed to the continual attacks of organised bands of robbers from without, subjected internally to the never-ending demands of a rapacious government, for which they have not a shadow of an advantage in return, it would be strange if aught but progressive decay and wretchedness were the consequence. In three centuries, more than one half of the villages, which either voluntarily or by force submitted to the rule of the founder, Beeka, are now without memorial of their existence, and the rest are gradually approximating to the same position. Commercial caravans which passed through this State and enriched its treasury with the transit duties, have almost ceased to frequent it from the increasing insecurity of its territory. Besides the personal loss to the prince, the country suffers from the deterioration of the commercial towns of Chooru, Rajgurh and Rinnie, which as entrepôts supplied the country with the productions of Sind and the provinces to the westward, as those of Gangetic India. Nor is this confined to Bikaner; the same cause affects Jessulmer and the more eastern principalities, whose misgovernment, equally with Bikaner, fosters the spirit of rapine: The Maldotes of Jessulmer and the Larkhanis of Jaipoor are as notorious as the Beedawats of Bikaner; and to these may be added the Sahraes, Khosas, and Rajurs, in the more western desert, who, in their habits and principles, are as demoralised as the Bedouins of Arabia.*

* Tod's Rajasthan, pp. 196, 197.

CHAPTER II

POLITICAL RELATIONS WITH THE BRITISH

First Appeal for British Help Refused

When Elphinstone, the British envoy to Kabul, passed through Bikaner in 1808, as many as five hostile armies were encamped around the State. Maharaja Surat Singh showed every hospitality to the Embassy, and tendered his allegiance to the British Government. It was not a case of preserving one's independence, but one of subservience. It had happened in the time of Akbar and history repeated itself on the advent of a new power in the land. The prowess, that had subdued and annihilated the pastoral peoples, always failed the rulers when they came face to face with a superior power and its organisation. The reason is not far to seek. The numerous descendants of Rao Bika had all done their bit in conquering territories, but their individual independence always stood in the way of increasing the power of the State. The ruler, on the other hand, was always rapacious, and spending all he could lay his hands on in wars and in building palaces for himself, thereby keeping the discontent ever alive both among his Thakurs and his people.

Under these circumstances, Surat Singh immediately made overtures to the Embassy for British help to fight the invading armies. But, "Mr. Elphinstone displayed considerable tact in avoiding entanglement in the quarrels of the contending parties." *

* Official writings of Mountstuart Elphinstone, Edited by Forrest, Published London 1884, p. 26.

Also Sodhi Hukm Singh's Physical and Political Geography of Bikaner pp. 79 and 80.

Rebellions and Invasions

The Thakurs of Churu, Bahadra, Dadreva, Nima, Jassana, Rawatsar and Birkali made common cause with the Bhatīs, the Joias and the Sikhs, rose in rebellion, and captured Ratangarh and other forts in 1815. In 1817 they joined their forces with Amir Khan Pindari, who was invading Bikaner. To quote Sohanlal from his historiography referred to above, "At this time the rebellion was so great that it was impossible to subdue it; and the Maharaja decided to seek help from the English, and therefore sent a wakil named Ojha (Ojha Kashee Nath), who entered into an agreement (meaning the treaty of 1818) with Mr. Charles Metcalfe, the then Resident at Delhi. Three battalions of British soldiers under General Alambar (?) came and recovered Hissar and Futtehabad. Fighting continued for ten days near Sidhmukh. British troops returned to Delhi . . . " *

EARLY BRITISH PERIOD

Examination of the Treaty of 1818.†

Mughal power had long decayed, the Mahratta power had not penetrated as far as this desert country, Bikaner was safe from the Mahratta *chouth* but was too weak to defend itself against the predatory adventurers from outside and against the widespread rebellion inside. The treaty of 1818 between Maharaja Surat Singh and the British Government was effected on the initiative of the Maharaja himself, who was keen to take advantage of Article VII of the treaty which reads:

* History of Bikaner in Hindi by Sohanlal, pp. 204 and 205.

† Treaties, Engagements and Sanads relating to India and neighbouring countries. Vol. III by Aitchison. See Appendix A.

'The British Government on, the application of the Maharaja will reduce to subjection Thakurs and other inhabitants of his principality who have revolted and thrown off his authority'

Immediately the Treaty was signed, an application for military aid was made and British arms quelled the rebellion for the time being, and drove the invaders away. The claim that is constantly put forward in recent years that this treaty was originally between two independent contracting parties, as if they were independent sovereigns, dealing on equal terms, has no foundation in fact. A sovereign does not, under ordinary circumstances, go and invite a third party to reduce his subjects to submission. The Maharaja, therefore, voluntarily accepted the sovereignty of the British Government in India and acknowledged his own subordinate position. In the treaty no tribute was exacted, as the State had paid none to the Mahraṭtas.

In face of the foregoing facts recorded by officials like Elphinstone and described in greater detail in the Hindi Historiography of Sohanlal, as well as in face of Article VII of the treaty with Bikaner, it is astounding how a personage of the status of Sir Manubhai M. Mehta, the then Prime Minister of Bikaner, considered to be one of the most eminent statesmen of feudal India, can advise the Princes that they had concluded their treaties as independent sovereigns. He says —

It is also wickedly stated that had it not been for the guarantee of the British Government to safeguard their thrones from internal commotion, the subjects of

states would have made short of their Princes; and the Princes are bound to rely on the strength of their subjects in the ultimate resort, as the policy of the British Government is to prove only a broken reed when bent to the will of the masses. History may well be more misread and motives may well be more wickedly misrepresented.

*
Who misreads history, the wicked ruler of India, or Sir Manubhai M. Mehta, who might have meant that he did not know Bikaner among the Indian States! Well known that such erudition and numbers in feudal courts only, where, when the raja says it is night, and the courtiers switch the lights on.

Power of Internal Authority

In subsequent treaties the Maharaja of Bikaner surrendered his residual internal independence to the British Government in India. By the Treaty of 1879 he gave up his right to maintain his own territories. By the treaty of 1904 he gave up to the British Government full jurisdiction of every kind over the Bikaner State. By the treaty of 1911 he gave up the Bikaner State to the British Government. By the treaty of 1893 the Maharaja undertook to supply the British Government with silver and copper in his own

Instances of British Interference *

(a) In 1829 Bikaner invaded Jaisalmer in violation of Article V of the Treaty which stipulates that the Maharaja and his heirs and successors will not commit aggressions on anyone ' The British Government interfered and the dispute between the two States¹ was settled through the arbitration of Udaipur

(b) In 1830 the Thakurs were again in rebellion and on the Maharaja applying for military help the Resident made preparations to send a force but it was pointed out by the Government that the Resident had acted under a misapprehension as to the tenor of the Articles VI and VII of the treaty These articles refer to the particular circumstances prevailing when the treaty was entered into and effect was given to their provisions They did not entitle the chief of Bikaner to call for military assistance against his disaffected subjects

(c) The trade route from Kabul to India lay through Bikaner and the transit trade was considerable at one time In 1844 Bikaner agreed to a scale of duties laid down by the British Government in order to protect this trade in accordance with the provisions contained in Article I

(d) Maharaja Sardar Singh assisted the Government in the suppression of the mutinies of 1857 and received in 1861 the grant of 41 villages in Tibi Pargana as a reward for his services He started immediately to interfere with the rights of the inhabitants which had been secured to them under the settlement of 1856 for twenty years The Maharaja was required in 1868 to abstain from

* Aitchison Vol III pp 301 303

such interference, and he agreed. He also agreed that, as a compensation for the losses sustained by the villagers during the seven years, the settlement would continue for a further period of seven years beyond the expiry of the twenty years.

(e) Throughout the reign of Sardar Singh and afterwards the State was misgoverned; debts were incurred, and the exactions of the Maharaja to increase the revenue resulted in much discontent. A British officer was deputed to inquire into the state of affairs and to introduce some reforms. The Maharaja promised to reduce his own expenses, but never carried it out. Sardar Singh died in 1872, but the misadministration continued in the reign of Maharaja Dungar Singh also. The affairs came to a head in 1883 when the Thakurs rose in rebellion again. On their refusing to settle matters amicably through the intervention of a British officer, a small force was sent by the Government in order to uphold the authority of the chief. A resident Political officer was appointed to Bikaner, and the information conveyed to His Highness Maharaja Sri Dungar Singhji Bahadur on the 31st December, 1883, by the following "Kharita from Lord Ripon, dated the 31st December, 1883 to the Maharaja."

"I have heard with much concern from Colonel Bradford, my Agent in Rajputana, of the disturbances which have occurred in your Highness' State during the course of this year. I have now received full reports from Colonel Bradford upon the cause of those disturbances and upon the measures which he recommends for the restoration of order in Bikaner. It appears that, in spite

Instances of British Interference *

(a) In 1829 Bikaner invaded Jaisalmer in violation of Article V of the Treaty, which stipulates that "the Maharaja and his heirs and successors will not commit aggressions on anyone" The British Government interfered, and the dispute between the two States¹ was settled through the arbitration of Udaipur.

(b) In 1830 the Thakurs were again in rebellion and on the Maharaja applying for military help, the Resident made preparations to send a force, but it was pointed out by the Government that the Resident had acted under a misapprehension as to the tenor of the Articles VI and VII of the treaty These articles refer to the particular circumstances prevailing when the treaty was entered into, and effect was given to their provisions They did not entitle the chief of Bikaner to call for military assistance against his disaffected subjects

(c) The trade route from Kabul to India lay through Bikaner, and the transit trade was considerable at one time In 1844 Bikaner agreed to a scale of duties laid down by the British Government in order to protect this trade in accordance with the provisions contained in Article I

(d) Maharaja Sardar Singh assisted the Government in the suppression of the mutinies of 1857, and received in 1861 the grant of 41 villages in Tibi Pargana as a reward for his services He started immediately to interfere with the rights of the inhabitants, which had been secured to them under the settlement of 1856 for twenty years The Maharaja was required in 1868 to abstain from

* Aitchison Vol III, pp 301-303

such interference, and he agreed. He also agreed that, as a compensation for the losses sustained by the villagers during the seven years, the settlement would continue for a further period of seven years beyond the expiry of the twenty years.

(e) Throughout the reign of Sardar Singh and afterwards the State was misgoverned; debts were incurred, and the exactions of the Maharaja to increase the revenue resulted in much discontent. A British officer was deputed to inquire into the state of affairs and to introduce some reforms. The Maharaja promised to reduce his own expenses, but never carried it out. Sardar Singh died in 1872, but the maladministration continued in the reign of Maharaja Dungar Singh also. The affairs came to a head in 1883 when the Thakurs rose in rebellion again. On their refusing to settle matters amicably through the intervention of a British officer, a small force was sent by the Government in order to uphold the authority of the chief. A resident Political officer was appointed to Bikaner, and the information conveyed to His Highness Maharaja Sri Dungar Singhji Bahadur on the 31st December, 1883, by the following Kharita from Lord Ripon.

"Kharita from Lord Ripon, dated the 31st December, 1883 to the address of His Highness Sri Dungar Singhji Bahadur.

'I have heard with much concern from Colonel Bradford, my Agent in Rajputana, of the disturbances which have occurred in your Highness' State during the course of this year. I have now received full reports from Colonel Bradford upon the cause of those disturbances and upon the measures which he recommends for the restoration of order in Bikaner. It appears that, in spite

Instances of British Interference *

(a) In 1829 Bikaner invaded Jaisalmer in violation of Article V of the Treaty, which stipulates that "the Maharaja and his heirs and successors will not commit aggressions on anyone." The British Government interfered, and the dispute between the two States was settled through the arbitration of Udaipur.

(b) In 1830 the Thakurs were again in rebellion, and on the Maharaja applying for military help, the Resident made preparations to send a force; but it was pointed out by the Government that the Resident had acted under a *misapprehension* as to the tenor of the Articles VI and VII of the treaty. These articles refer to the particular circumstances prevailing when the treaty was entered into, and effect was given to their provisions. They did not entitle the chief of Bikaner to call for military assistance against his disaffected subjects.

(c) The trade route from Kabul to India lay through Bikaner, and the transit trade was considerable at one time. In 1844 Bikaner agreed to a scale of duties laid down by the British Government in order to protect this trade in accordance with the provisions contained in Article I.

(d) Maharaja Sardar Singh assisted the Government in the suppression of the mutinies of 1857, and received in 1861 the grant of 41 villages in Tibi Pargana as a reward for his services. He started immediately to interfere with the rights of the inhabitants, which had been secured to them under the settlement of 1856 for twenty years. The Maharaja was required in 1868 to abstain from

* Aitchison Vol III, pp. 301-303

such interference, and he agreed. He also agreed that, as a compensation for the losses sustained by the villagers during the seven years, the settlement would continue for a further period of seven years beyond the expiry of the twenty years.

(e) Throughout the reign of Sardar Singh and afterwards the State was misgoverned; debts were incurred, and the exactions of the Maharaja to increase the revenue resulted in much discontent. A British officer was deputed to inquire into the state of affairs and to introduce some reforms. The Maharaja promised to reduce his own expenses, but never carried it out. Sardar Singh died in 1872, but the maladministration continued in the reign of Maharaja Dungar Singh also. The affairs came to a head in 1883 when the Thakurs rose in rebellion again. On their refusing to settle matters amicably through the intervention of a British officer, a small force was sent by the Government in order to uphold the authority of the chief. A resident Political officer was appointed to Bikaner, and the information conveyed to His Highness Maharaja Sri Dungar Singhji Bahadur on the 31st December, 1883, by the following Kharita from Lord Ripon.

"Kharita from Lord Ripon, dated the 31st December, 1883 to the address of His Highness Sri Dungar Singhji Bahadur.

'I have heard with much concern from Colonel Bradford, my Agent in Rajputana, of the disturbances which have occurred in your Highness' State during the course of this year. I have now received full reports from Colonel Bradford upon the cause of those disturbances and upon the measures which he recommends for the restoration of order in Bikaner. It appears that, in spite

of all warnings to the contrary, Your Highness has remained in the hands of evil advisers, and that for some years past there has been no improvement in the administration of the State. Numerous abuses have been allowed to prevail, and the condition of the State has become more and more serious, until at last Your Highness' authority has been openly defied; and it has been necessary for the British Government at your Highness' request, to put down rebellion in your territory by the despatch of an armed force.

"My friend, the British Government cannot permit the recurrence of such a state of affairs. I shall always be ready to preserve the legitimate authority of the Native Chiefs of India against unlawful rebellion; but it is my duty to prevent the dominions of Native Chiefs from falling into a condition of anarchy and disorder which render rebellion possible. In the present case it appears clear to me that the State of Bikaner cannot be preserved from disorder in the future unless Your Highness is aided in the administration of your territories for a time at least, by the constant presence and support of a British Officer, and I have desired Colonel Bradford to inform your Highness that a resident Political Agent will now be appointed to Bikaner. I am very reluctant to interfere with the internal administration of Native States, and Captain Talbot, the Officer whom I have selected for the post, will not be ordered to assume the direct control of the Government, but it is necessary that Your Highness should consult him freely and be guided by his advice; and Colonel Bradford will inform Your Highness of the matters upon which I consider it specially desirable that he should afford Your Highness the advantages of his counsel and assistance.

I trust that Your Highness will unreservedly acquiesce in these arrangements, and will endeavour by every means in your power to restore good order throughout your territories, and to regain the confidence of the British Government." *

(f) In 1904-1905 Maharaja Sir Ganga Singh discovered another plot of the Thakurs to rise in rebellion and to spread disaffection among the people. A commission was appointed to deal with the case, presumably with the approval of the Resident, and punishments were awarded to the Pattedars of Ajitpura, Bidasar and Gopalpura. But, the Government considered the punishments too severe, and in spite of all protests of the Maharaja to the contrary, the Political Agent conveyed the final orders of the Government in his letter No. 160-P, dated Bikaner, the 7th December, 1905 † the last two paragraphs of which are significant of the relations existing between a vassal State and the Paramount Power. These are:—

"In thus remitting the ultimate decision in the matter to Your Highness, Lord Curzon, as almost his last official act in India, was reposing a confidence in Your Highness, which His Excellency is convinced, will be justified.

In conclusion, I have to remark, with regard to the penultimate paragraph of this letter, that the Hon. the Agent to the Governor-General is assured that Your Highness will show yourself worthy of the confidence reposed in you by the Government of India."

* Notes:—Indian States Committee - Questions connected with Treaty Relations (Prime Minister, Bikaner State) p. 43.

† Ibid pp. 48, 49. See Appendix B.

MAHARAJA SIR GANGA SINGH AND THE GOVERNMENT

Maharaja Sir Ganga Singh Bahadur is certainly a shrewd politician, and has been trying ever since his installation to secure for himself his own absolute independence in the management of his internal affairs. His voluminous correspondence* with the Resident Political Agent at Bikaner and with the Agent to the Governor-General at Mount Abu bear the impress of his almost instinctive knowledge of diplomacy. But, as noted in (f) above and in many minor instances the British Government remain paramount and insist on subordinate co-operation on the part of the ruler of Bikaner. The British Government interfere whenever they please, claiming for themselves the responsibility for maintaining good administration and good order in the State so that rebellions may be prevented. For instance, there was the Maniwali dacoity case, accompanied by torture and murder, in which the Bikaner judge had sentenced two men, Naraina and Khazan Singh to be hanged. They had appealed to the Maharaja for mercy. Captain S. F. Bayley, the Resident Political Agent, after going through the file of this case, writing on the 28th April 1900, said

"My dear Ganga Singh,

and so far I must say that I do not see any reason for extending mercy to Khazan Singh. It is true that it was Naraina who actually burnt the poor Brahmin's private parts off and who went on burning him when the others had done, but I

* Loc. cit. pp 45-80

think Khazan Singh did quite enough to render it highly advisable that he should be hanged . . .

Yours sincerely,
(Sd.) S. F. Bayley." *

On another occasion, one Moolchand Mali had petitioned to the Political Agent from the jail; and Captain Bayley wrote to the Maharaja demi-officially asking for a short note on the case. The Maharaja replied by a private letter † in which he agreed to send the required note, but complained in a begging manner that if he (Captain Bayley) asked for the file of each case, the people who petitioned got to know of it through the clerks and it put their back up, and even if he did not interfere, it upset the Maharaja's authority, for it gave them the feeling that he could not do anything very much himself without the Political Agent's asking for an explanation. He was also afraid that although the Political Agent had so far been petitioned mostly by outsiders, lots of Bikaneris who were discontented might also begin to do the same if they found out anything about that procedure. Captain Bayley therefore writes his letter ‡ of the 19th December, 1899, and points out that it is the duty of the Political Agent to satisfy himself that the State is justly and well-governed and that this can be done only by occasionally calling for reports on selected petitions, and he assures the Maharaja that it is not uncommon to call for information in respect of complaints of this nature from the biggest Durbars in India.

Maharaja Sir Ganga Singh was evidently from the very beginning of his reign anxious to estab-

* Loc. cit. p. 77.

† Ibid pp. 66, 67. See Appendix C.

‡ Loc. cit. pp. 68, 69. See Appendix D.

lish his independent sovereignty in his own territories, and rightly thought that the laws of his land should apply equally to all and even to the Political Agent. This officer, on the other hand, knew he belonged to the race of the Paramount Power and could not consent to be amenable to the local laws. The following correspondence regarding a shooting license, although a trivial matter, throws some light on the mentality of both the parties.

Maharaja's letter to the Political Agent

"Bikaner,

24th January, 1900

My Dear Captain Bayley,

As we are very strict about shooting in the districts, I am sending you a shooting license as a matter of form. I hope you will have some good shooting, though I doubt if there will be much round there this year. In any year, very few buck there. So I hope you will not shoot many.

I meant to have sent you the license before you started but forgot.

Yours sincerely,
Ganga Singh

"NON-TRANSFERABLE

¹NO. 3 SHOOTING LICENSE BIKANER STATE

Captain S F Bayley, Political Agent can shoot all kinds of game in the Districts which he passes through on tour excluding Nil when out on tour, but it is requested he will shoot as few *black buck* as possible.

(Sd) GANGA SINGH
Maharaja of Bikaner" *

* Loc. cit. pp 72, 73.

ment of the expenses of troops," as provided in the treaty of 1818. Such a contention is tantamount to saying "you give us the troops and we will pay the expenses. But you must not inquire into the causes that led up to the critical situation which called for troops." It is futile to expect the sovereign partner to agree to an arrangement of this sort. Nevertheless, this view point was pressed with the following interesting argument

'That the effect of all this interference and the manner in which it is introduced, as the too obvious conclusion and consequence of the trouble between the Ruler and his vassals is very demoralising, would, it is hoped, not be denied. Whatever else it may do, it certainly affects prejudicially the Sovereignty of the Ruler, and his prestige which should be "absolute" within his State and in the eyes of his Sardars and subjects, suffers. It serves in no uncertain measure to crystallise into a definite shape what may have formerly been vague ideas—that may only then have started germinating in certain perverse and disaffected mentalities, and which by tactful handling and with proper support of the prestige of the Ruler could have been nipped in the bud—about a higher power also being directly on the scene. Human nature being what it is, all interference that tends towards the lowering of the prestige of the Ruler affects the ties of allegiance and loyalty that bind his subject to him, and the feeling begins to grow in the minds of the subjects, instinctively and perhaps imperceptibly in the beginning, that it may be more advantageous to them to owe allegiance direct to the higher power in defiance of their own Liege Lord. Even the people of the right way of thinking and those that may have had doubts previously and had sat on

the fence also begin to be perverted to the view of the recalcitrant. And even if open trouble is put down for the time being, the process that has been started goes on in the form of an under-current of discontent and hostility towards the Rulers on the part of certain disgruntled people, who are not a peculiar feature only of an Indian State but of all administrations where authority, not being able to please all, has in the course of administration of justice to incur the displeasure of a few." *

The people of the State have never come into the picture. Their wishes were ascertained neither in 1818, nor on the subsequent occasions when other treaties and agreements were entered into. Nor were they allowed to appear before the Butler Committee. But, the few cases of interference due to maladministration or excessive punishments were a saving grace and had acted as a check on the ruler. The pleading on behalf of the State was for the purpose of securing a status of independence whereby the ruler could do with his people as he pleased, as long as he remained loyal to the crown. This is a status that was never enjoyed by the State nor envisaged by the treaty; and the subsequent usage and precedents cannot be wiped out in this manner. However, the attempt made to secure such a status shows how the interests of the people of Bikaner were being sacrificed before a Committee, the sittings of which were held in camera, and which rejected the offer of the people's representatives to give evidence.

BIKANER AND THE CONSTITUTION ACT OF 1935

It now remains to examine the part that the Maharaja of Bikaner, along with the other

* Loc. cit. pp. 28, 29.

princes of India played in the passage of the Government of India Act, 1935 the second part of which deals with the proposed Federation of the Provinces with the States. The princes were applauded at the time of the first Round Table Conference when they readily agreed to the idea of Federation. The first impression was that the Princes were for once displaying their patriotism in building a united India. But, the inner working of their minds scrupulously guarded by their eminent ministers and legal advisers, could not be fathomed at the time. The reactionary and unpatriotic nature of their minds became evident in the later conferences, and the whole country has completely condemned the proposed Federation envisaged in the 1935 Act. However, it is pertinent here to record some of the curious safeguards which they insisted on, and which they succeeded in incorporating in the 1935 Act.

List of Safeguards *

(a) The struggle for civil liberties, which has figured most prominently in many a State for the last three years, was forestalled by the princes by means of the safeguard, which reads thus

'The fundamental rights shall find no place in the Federal Constitution and shall not be treated as a Federal subject. They may subject to His Majesty's pleasure find expression in the King Emperor's proclamation as applying only to His British Indian Dominion.'

The Constitution, therefore, has no place for these rights. It affords no protection to the people of

* Confidential Report of the Constitutional Committee of the Chamber of Princes. Printed by the Hindusthan Times Press, Delhi 1937 pp 13 14

the States. Nor is there any means in the Constitution whereby they can win or establish their civil rights.

(b) Sovereignty of the States is a new attribute appropriated by the princes since the sittings of the Butler Committee. It has been amply demonstrated in the foregoing pages that Bikaner never enjoyed such sovereignty. So is the case with every other State. The fact notwithstanding, the claim was put forward and conceded in the Constitution. This safeguard reads:

"The sovereignty and autonomy of the States shall be fully respected and guaranteed and there shall be no interference direct or indirect with the internal affairs of the States."

Other important safeguards affecting the interests of the States people are given below:

"The Viceroy will have the power to disallow any Bill or veto any Act which may adversely affect the rights recognised by treaty or otherwise of any State or States. The Viceroy will also have power to disallow or arrest any executive Act of the Federation which may have similar tendencies."

"The States must have at least 40 per cent representation in the Upper House and 33-1/3% in the lower house. The system and method by which their representatives will be chosen must be purely a State concern and no interference of any kind by Federation shall be permitted."

"The States will enter Federation by means of Treaties made with the crown for the purposes of Federation."

'There shall be a separate Instrument of Instruction to the Viceroy—as distinct from the Governor-General—and it shall be laid down in it that the Viceroy as the representative of the King-Emperor shall be responsible to ensure respect for the rights of the States as guaranteed to them by their Treaties, engagements and sanads which have been declared as inviolate and inviolable' and are unalterable without the free consent of the contracting parties "

'Federal Court shall derive its authority from the crown as well as from the Rulers of each Federating State "

INSTRUMENT OF ACCESSION

The committee appointed by the Conference of Princes and held at Bombay on the 30th October 1936 consisted of the late Maharaja of Patiala as Chairman and of the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes as well as the Maharajas of Bikaner, Dewas 2 and Panna the Nawab of Rampur, the Yuvraj of Limbdi and 26 ministers of various States. This Committee was satisfied that the seventeen essential safeguards "have been substantially met and that, in so far as they have not been met or remain open to doubt, the recommendations suggested below will effectively achieve the objects which the safeguards were designed to serve. Nor are the recommendations conceived only in the light of the safeguards thus formulated, they represent conclusions arrived at independently by an examination of the Act and of the Draft Instrument and by an appreciation of what they, consider to be essential in the interests of the States .

* Loc. cit. p 1

This is not the place to go into the details of their recommendations, but these so amended the Draft Instrument of Accession and so limited the scope of the Federal Legislative List, that the proposed Federation would be the most dangerous instrument, not only for the people of the States, but also for those of the Provinces. The princes would derive all the benefits of the Federation and would perform federal functions on behalf of the federal authorities. They would be dual personalities, one having relations with the Crown, "The Federal authorities are not to interfere in the relations between the Crown and the Ruler." The conventions of the International Labour Conference, Geneva, regarding working hours and conditions of labour and labour welfare would not be applicable to the Indian States. It would not be a united India, but an India broken up, besides the Provinces, into 584 mostly small principalities like so many water-tight compartments, separate one from the other, by levels of administration, by customs barriers, by degrees of development, or by unwillingness to develop at all, and on top of it all, clinging to the apron strings of the Paramount Power for ever, which alone can maintain the princes in their autocracy. How different is this mentality, this attitude, from that of the feudal lords, the Samurais of Japan, who voluntarily sacrificed their individual independence a century ago and built a united Nippon!

CHAPTER III

ADMINISTRATION

The Maharaja is the absolute ruler at the head of the administration. He is the fountain head of all the legislative, judicial and executive systems. There being no constitution he is responsible to no one but himself. The Executive Council, the Judicial Committee, the High Court and the Legislative Assembly are his own creations and he has delegated certain of his powers to them for the convenience of administration. He can limit these delegated powers or withdraw them any time he chooses. Had there been a constitution, he would have been responsible to the people, and all the above institutions would have the sanction of law. It is necessary to bear this difference in mind while considering the system of administration.

Executive Council

The Maharaja, in his administration of the State, is assisted by an Executive Council consisting of the Prime Minister and six other ministers, each in charge of several portfolios. These ministers are in many cases also the executive heads of certain departments. For instance, the Chief Justice of the High Court is also a member of the Executive Council. Mr Hamilton Harding, I P, formerly Superintendent of Police, Lahore whose services have been secured on loan from the Punjab Government, is the head of the Police Department as well as Home Minister in the Council. There are some ministers who do not have much of an education, but are large Patta-dars (Jagirdars) having considerable vested

interests in the land. For the last twenty years or so, the members of the Council have been either Rajputs or outsiders. No Oswals, Mahomedans, Agarwals or Brahmins are considered fit enough to be elevated to the Council, no matter how high their qualifications, and how extended their experience may be.

Law and Order

The highest court of justice, something in imitation of the Privy Council of the British Empire, is the Judicial Committee consisting of seven members, of whom only three have a knowledge of law. With the exception of possibly one, no other has had any extended experience of the Bench or the Bar, which alone would qualify a person to sit in judgment in the highest court of the land. The remaining four members, Mr. Hamilton Harding, Maharaj Mandhata Singh, Thakur Hari Singh, and Raja Jeoraj Singh are said to have no knowledge of law. Mr. Harding, as head of the Police Department, has naturally to direct the prosecution of criminal cases in the lower courts, and again sits in judgment over these cases on appeal in the judicial Committee. Furthermore, he has to judge highly complicated civil cases that come before the Committee. The Pattadars have large stakes in the State in the form of Jagirs, and sit in judgment over civil and criminal cases, in which they may themselves be interested.

In a discussion of these anomalies, one of the members of this Judicial Committee assured the writer in private that the members possessing legal knowledge explain the points of law, and those having no such knowledge digest the explanation and give their opinion. The question arises if such an explanation would be hazarded

by any serious person anywhere outside the limits of the State' The Judicial Committee is therefore not only a travesty of justice, but a very dangerous instrument in the hands of the authorities to deny impartial justice to the people.

In 1922 the Maharaja had declared in what is called a 'royal charter' that only members of his Executive Council would be taken into the Judicial Committee But, at present the Legal Remembrancer, who is not a Minister, is included in the Committee

The Judiciary, that is, the Judges of the High Court, the District Judges, the Magistrates, and the Munsiffs are almost all law graduates of the Indian universities, but many of them are appointed to high posts without their having had much experience either at the Bench or at the Bar inside the State or elsewhere These recruitments are not subject to any fixed rules, and junior officers without the required qualifications often supersede fully qualified and experienced senior officers There have been occasions when a law graduate has been superseded by a man who hardly knows how to sign his name.

There is no competitive examination for recruitment to the services with the consequence that nepotism prevails in every branch of service Nor is there security of tenure for the State servants An efficient man doing his work faithfully, incurs the displeasure of some higher official, and his services are dispensed with. A District Magistrate, who was an impartial and just officer, and whose services were appreciated by the Maharaja himself, had to make unfavourable remarks in many police cases, and became the target of the Police Department In spite of the

often interfered with by the executive. The people have been conceded the right to sue the State as a corporate body, but such cases are hardly ever successful. They have the right to sue the officials with the permission of the head of the department concerned. However, such permission is practically never granted.

Security of Property

Except in Bikaner and other towns the people have no rights over their homestead lands. These vest in the State in the Khalsa area, and in the Jagirdar or Pattadar in Jagir area. In Bikaner city many people's homestead lands were acquired at low prices for building a new town. These plots were sold to others at ten or fifteen times the purchase price. But, the offers of the owners to buy back at the lower price were turned down. The New Circular Market was built on land acquired by similar purchases. This acquisition serves no public purpose at all, but the market was built simply to be a show place for the Maharaja's procession on the occasion of his golden jubilee in 1937.

The above disabilities and arbitrary procedures indicate the utter absence of a Rule of Law. The High Court, the Judicial Committee and the Executive Council only contribute to a top-heavy administration, which did not exist a quarter of a century ago, and which now add considerably to the burden of the people.

often interfered with by the executive. The people have been conceded the right to sue the State as a corporate body, but such cases are hardly ever successful. They have the right to sue the officials with the permission of the head of the department concerned. However, such permission is practically never granted.

Security of Property

Except in Bikaner and other towns the people have no rights over their homestead lands. These vest in the State in the Khalsa area, and in the Jagirdar or Pattadar in Jagir area. In Bikaner city many people's homestead lands were acquired at low prices for building a new town. These plots were sold to others at ten or fifteen times the purchase price. But, the offers of the owners to buy back at the lower price were turned down. The New Circular Market was built on land acquired by similar purchases. This acquisition serves no public purpose at all, but the market was built simply to be a show place for the Maharaja's procession on the occasion of his golden jubilee in 1937.

The above disabilities and arbitrary procedures indicate the utter absence of a Rule of Law. The High Court, the Judicial Committee and the Executive Council only contribute to a top-heavy administration, which did not exist a quarter of a century ago, and which now add considerably to the burden of the people.

CHAPTER IV

CIVIL LIBERTIES

Freedom of the Press

There is an old Press Law, but never has any newspaper been published in the State excepting a magazine "Pushkarendu", the proprietor of which was ordered not to touch politics. He was so handicapped in the editing of it without politics that he had to discontinue its publication. During Sir Manubhai Mehta's ministership one, Agarchand Bania had applied to start a newspaper, but no permission was granted. Besides the Government Press a couple of privately owned presses print only forms for business houses, and religious and text books. A teacher had once written a book for publication, but the manuscripts were seized by the police and never returned. Certain newspapers and journals which criticise the administration are banned from the State. "Princely India," and "Riyasat" of Delhi were so banned for many years. Entry of "Rajasthan" of Ajmer is now prohibited. The State imposes restrictions on the distribution of leaflets and circulars. Recently, the 'Independence Day' leaflet was proscribed.

Freedom of Speech and Association

The fundamental rights of free speech and free association were so effectively scotched by the Bikaner Public Safety Act of 1932, and by the application of this Act so many deportations and confiscations of property have been effected during recent years that the people are terror-stricken;

and everyone says "Bikaner is a prison-house, and we can't open our mouths!" It is therefore necessary to examine this Act in some detail.

The Bikaner Public Safety Act of 1932

This Act, under Section 4, prohibits any agitation among labourers in order to demand higher wages, and among kisans for reduction of rent, etc. The intention underlying such actions or advice to commit such acts is taken to be subversion of the duly constituted Government of Bikaner. The accused may be proceeded against or may be ordered to live in certain specified localities or may be externed out of the State. Their properties may be confiscated.

Section 16 prohibits the entry by post or by mail of any book or newspaper or any other literature containing matter which is likely to create disaffection against the Maharaja or his Government, or against any other Raja or Government which the Maharaja's Government may declare by notification in the State Gazette.

Section 23 makes the possession of prohibited literature and its propagation an offence punishable by a term of imprisonment extending to six months, or a fine, or both.

Section 26 makes it an offence for those who afford protection and shelter to the alleged offenders under the foregoing sections and provides for fines.

Section 27 makes it obligatory to apply for permission to hold a public meeting three days prior to such meeting to the Inspector General of Police, or to the Magistrate. No meeting can be held without such permission. Any meeting held in a private home, or with tickets for admission are considered public meetings. The Inspector

General of Police or the Magistrate has the authority to prevent the holding of such meetings without permission.

Section 34 empowers the District Magistrate to declare such meetings without permission unlawful, and to attach the place or the house where the meeting is held.

According to Section 35 any society or association, whether in Bikaner or in any other territory, which creates disaffection against the Government of Bikaner, and those connected therewith, will be punishable according to relevant sections.

Section 36 empowers the District Magistrate to confiscate all movable properties in the places where unlawful meetings are held. People using such unlawful places will be arrested, and no bail will be granted to them.

According to Section 38 if a number of people assemble in a place that has been declared unlawful, and if one of them, without declaring that it is a meeting, delivers a lecture which may create excitement among those assembled, he will be arrested by the police without warrant.

Section 39 makes it an offence for anyone who refuses to pay land rent or any other taxes, or who advises people not to pay. Such offenders will be awarded six months' imprisonment or fine, or both. These offences can be taken cognizance of by the police, and they will not be bailable.

The Bikaner Public Safety Act was amended in January 1940. In the bill introduced by Mr. G. T. Hamilton Harding, the Home Minister under "Statement of objects and reasons," it is stated that "The amendments proposed in the Bill are

of a precautionary character and it is hoped that, they may never have to be availed of. Problems of a peculiar nature have sometimes arisen in other States of India, where for want of necessary powers great difficulty was experienced in meeting them. It is the wish of His Highness' Government that in the unlikely event of a contingency arising here they should not be similarly handicapped and find themselves obliged to enact measures without any reference to the Assembly."

Sub-section 2 of Section 1 of the Act, as amended, now reads "This Act shall apply to the whole of Bikaner State and shall apply to all Bikaner subjects wherever residing, and an offence made punishable by the Act even if committed by any subject outside the State shall be deemed to have been committed within the State of Bikaner wherever such subject is found." This is an astounding departure in legislation of this nature, and will perhaps not be found in any other State in India.

Another amendment prohibits display of any *uniform, emblem or badge* on anyone's person indicating membership of any association or body likely to cause disaffection.

Section 21 B prohibits practice of any exercise, movement, evolution, or drill of a military nature by persons other than members of the State Army or of the Police Force of His Highness the Maharaja.

Instigating or organisation of hartal is prohibited by Section 21 E.

Such an all-comprehensive Act is rightly called the "Black Act" in Bikaner, and has most effectively suppressed every bit of freedom since 1932 when the trial of the notorious conspiracy case

of Sri Satya Narayan Saraf and others was started and continued for two years. The writer sensed this suppression when a C. I. D. man in plain clothes noted down his identification marks in the hotel register against his name. Everywhere he went to a private house, his friends would be looking out if anyone was overhearing their conversation. It is no wonder the people have nicknamed their State a prison-house.

The writer had occasion to discuss with a very highly placed official regarding the advisability of granting permission to organise a praja mandal. The official said that the people are children and cannot be trusted with such freedom. He did not realise that in making this statement he was condemning the government of which he is a part.

Personal Liberty

Persons are often detained without trial. A glaring instance was the arrest and detention of Jayanti Prasad Shanedan in 1924. On his release after two years' confinement without trial, he was again arrested by the verbal orders of the Inspector-General of Police and the Home Member. In recent years powers have been conferred on the High Court to hear *habeas corpus* motions. But such motions are seldom cared for. One Bhamar Lal Gehlot was detained by the police without trial. On a motion being made before the High Court, the police reported that he was detained for some confidential enquiry. A second motion was made, and Gehlot was set free after eight or ten days' detention. Persons, who are subjects of the State but may somehow incur the displeasure of the authorities are deported, and in many instances their properties confiscated.

Deportations and confiscations of property

(a) Some years ago, on the death of the Junior Maharajkumar it is said to have been ordered, not by public notice, but verbally, that there would be no cooking in anyone's house for twelve days. Rajguru Tikai Bhero Singh's father had also died a few days previously, and in performing *shradh* ceremony Rajguru had to cook food during the prohibited period for relations and friends. He was deported out of the State, and his properties confiscated. Later some of the properties were handed over to the mother. But the Rajguru is still living in Ajmer.

(b) In 1933 or thereabout, Mahant Gopaldas Swamiji fell out of favour for having delivered a speech at Churu criticising the policy of the State in enhancing rents, etc., and his property was confiscated.

(c) Sardar Darbara Singh and Tara Singh were alleged to have been encouraging kisan organisation in the Gang Canal area, and their house and lands were confiscated. However, the procedure was regularised on the basis that their rents were in arrears.

(d) A Tazimi Pattadar, Raja Jeevraj Singh, had lands in the Gang Canal area. As these lands were needed for colonisation, he was asked to exchange these for lands in some other locality. On his refusal to comply, his Patta, house and all movable and immovable properties were confiscated, and he with his family was externed out of the State.

(e) Village Amarpura in Bhatner district, in the possession of the owner long before the district was joined to the State, which had been admitted by two Maharajas in Sambat 1879 and Sambat .

1908, was confiscated by the State in the present Maharaja's reign.

(f) Sri Satya Narayan Saraf, after serving a term of three years on a charge of sedition and conspiracy was alleged to have organised a Praja Mandal along with Sris Magha Ram and Laxmidas towards the end of 1936. These three and a vakil, Sri Mukta Prasad, who had defended Sri Satya Narayan and others in the sedition and conspiracy case were externed out of the State.

(g) About 1925 Seth Jamnalal Bajaj, on his arrival in Bikaner Station, was ordered to leave the State. He refused to do so, and was taken bodily and put into the train on its journey outwards.

(h) Village Thedi in Tahsil Hanumangarh belonging to the Naths was confiscated without any legal process.

(i) Occupancy and proprietary rights over some lands were sold in the year 1866-67 to certain agriculturists. A large part of these lands situated on or near the Gang Canal was confiscated without any legal process.

(j) All the *muafi* lands, at the rate of 100 *bighas* each, granted as permanent gifts to the soldiers recruited for the Great War of 1914-1918, were confiscated by the State shortly after the termination of the war.

(k) Mahant Bharon Gir had purchased from the State 150,000 *bighas* of land at a price of Rs. 2,06,000, and founded Ramnagar village. As the State required these lands, it was agreed between the State and the proprietor that the latter should be paid the sum of Rs. 30,000 annually until his dues were paid up. The agree-

ment is said to have been endorsed by the Political Agent as well as by the then Agent to the Governor-General in Rajputana. The lands were surrendered, but the annuity was not paid; and in addition to this breach of contract, the Mahant's movable property worth nine lakhs of rupees was confiscated by the State.

(1) There are numerous confiscations and deportations in the Jagir areas. Mehram Jat of Arsasar, Kalu Jat of Badher, Teja Jat of Ratansar, Arjun Jat of Kumbhgarh, and many others, all in Patta Mahajan, have recently been externed, and their properties confiscated, for their refusal to pay arbitrarily-enhanced rents and other illegal exactions. The refusal came after the failure to obtain any redress from petitions made to the Prime Minister, the Home Minister, the Revenue Minister and others.

Slavery

In the sixth Committee of the League of Nations in 1926, the British delegate assured the members that

"the Government of India were satisfied that slavery in the ordinary sense did not exist in the Indian States, but were prepared to urge the Rulers of the States to institute reforms when necessary while they did not consider that interference with the internal administration of ruling princes was justified, they would not fail to make suitable recommendations to the State Rulers." *

Slavery has existed all along in Bikaner and in many other Rajputana States, and if the Government of India ignore the cold fact and take a

* Indian Princes under British Protection by P. L. Chudgar
Published London, Williams and Norgate, Ltd. 1929, p. 33.

lenient view of it, the ruler naturally feels encouraged to do likewise with any recommendation made to him. It is presumed that strong recommendations were made by the Government of India after 1926. But the situation remains today as it did then.

The origin of the slave communities of Bikaner, as of any Rajputana State, can be traced to the numerous young maids who come as a part of the dowry with the bride to the raj family. They remain in the palace as mistresses of the particular bridegroom or of the other male members of the family. The children from the extramarital unions are called Chakars, Hazuris, Chelas, Golas and Darogas; and are slaves owned, either by the ruler of the State, or by the thakurs, or Rajput nobles, as the latter are styled in modern times. They are allowed neither to have any property rights nor any private rights whatsoever. In return for their services they are allowed only food and clothes and the food mostly consists of what is left over from their masters' plates.

The wives and daughters of these slaves are given away by their masters as part of the dowry with their own daughters. Marriage and divorce among these unfortunate people is controlled by the master, whose will is the law. If, at any time, they run away and take shelter elsewhere, they are forcibly brought back under the roof of the original master.

The slaves, known as Daroga, in Bikaner, according to 1931 census number 13,629 or 1.5% of the total population of the State. In order to raise themselves from this opprobrium these people had claimed to be enumerated as Ravana Rajputs, but the claim was rejected by the census authorities. No legislation emancipating these slaves

and defining their status in society is known to have been enacted since 1926. It is worth mentioning in this connection that the Maharaja of Bikaner was once a delegate to the League of Nations, and he is presumed to be fully acquainted with the latest conventions of the League aiming at the uplift of the peoples of the member countries. However, the responsibility for the existence of slavery even in the year 1940 is primarily of the Government of India.

Bikaner Conspiracy Case of 1932.

In connection with the Public Safety Act, it is appropriate to deal with this case. In 1931 some persons in Bikaner began to take some interest in the All-India States Peoples' Conference by reading the published reports and by correspondence. But, no one ever attended any session of the Conference, nor did anyone become a member. On the other hand, Major Kothawala, a police officer of the State attended the Conference in Bombay in June, 1931. On his return, it is said, a circular was issued to the officers to the effect that representatives of the Conference would come to Bikaner, enlist members, hold meetings, and the officers were warned to watch and report. Nothing of this nature happened. But eight persons were arrested on suspicion. The only thing that had happened was that several articles criticising the Bikaner administration had appeared in the 'Riyasat' and 'Princely India' of Delhi, and a meeting had been held at Churu where speeches were delivered criticising the policy of the State in enhancing rents, etc. But, the accused were prosecuted under Sections 377C, 124A and 120B of the Bikaner Penal Code. The trial extended over two years, and seven of the accused were sentenced to imprisonment for

terms from six months to three years. The eighth had turned approver. According to the statement of one of these seven "A representation was made in private interviews to Sir Manubhai Mehta, the then Prime Minister, who recommended to His Highness that the case was groundless, and should have been withdrawn. Under H. H.'s order some three or four were released before the expiry of their terms, while Satya Narayan Saraf and Chandanmal Baher had to undergo their full terms."

This was the first case of its kind, and the accused in their petition to the Prime Minister dated the 26th April, 1932, represented that the police had terrorised villagers into signing statements against them, and had been persecuting friends who were coming to help them in their defence, and that the local pleaders were therefore unwilling to defend them. They further pointed out that many intricate matters in the Federal Constitution and many political documents and papers with which the local pleaders were not conversant, would have to be argued; and they quoted four precedents in which outside lawyers had been allowed to appear in Bikaner courts. The accused therefore prayed for permission to engage suitable counsels from outside the State. But, the Prime Minister passed a curious order that "inasmuch as Babu Mukta Prasad has been engaged as vakil on behalf of the accused, it is considered unnecessary to pass any order on this petition." The fact, that this local pleader was engaged by only one of the accused, and not by all, was ignored. On another complaint petition of Sri Satyanarayan Saraf the judge remarked that "the accused himself is a lawyer, that he is being defended by a local pleader, and that therefore an outside lawyer is unnecessary". Similarly

their demand for a jury trial in accordance with the Darbars announcement gazetted in 1930 conceding trial by jury, was turned down with the remark that 'no case has up to date been tried by a jury' When these and many other complaints were not heeded by the authorities, and when the accused found that all facilities for a fair trial were denied to them, they refused to take part in the proceedings of the sessions court, and registered their protest in writing. With these facts on record one cannot help the conclusion that there was no fair trial. In one petition the accused had stated 'The police are treating us inhumanly and have threatened us with these words, 'In this case whatever we desire will be carried out. Nobody can help you' The will of the police was carried out, and nobody could help them'

For a full understanding of this conspiracy case, in which the accused were awarded such un-called-for sentences and harassed for years, and of the absence of a check on the Courts of the State it is necessary to mention here that the post of the Resident Political Agent was abolished about 1909, and the State began to have direct relations with the Resident of the Western Rajputana States. With regard to the sentences, Maharaja Sir Ganga Singh's own words expressed in a previous case may be usefully quoted here. In his Private and Confidential letter of the 1st April 1905, from Camp Alwar to Major Stratton, the then Political Agent in Bikaner, he said, 'For my own part and as far as our State is concerned, I am convinced and I hope you agree with me that it would have become impossible to carry on State work properly had this action of the Pattedar not been checked in time, or these punishments not been awarded, as with-

out them no example could have been satisfactorily set to the other Pattedars, and though prophecies are dangerous, yet I venture to say that this has now had the desired effect, and that we need not fear any more rebellions and seditious movements of importance at any rate for a long time to come. Of course, I speak under correction as regards the other States."

And this is exactly the Pattedars' case in which Lord Curzon had interfered, and the Government of India's orders were that "Punishments so severe as those meted out by Your Highness would never be inflicted in British territory . . ."

The conspiracy case of 1932 had the desired effect, and since the enforcement of the Bikaner Public Safety Act in 1932 there are no public meetings, no public associations, and no freedom for the collection of any funds for public purposes other than religious. There is therefore no civil liberty at all, and there cannot be any until this Act with its amendments is repealed. Everyone the writer met in Bikaner expressed the same opinion that it should be repealed — that is the

CHAPTER V

THE BUDGET

Income

The earliest record of at least an estimate of the annual income of the State is that by Colonel Tod, who gives it as follows during the nineteenth century *

Main heads of Income:—

	Rs.
1 Khalisa or fiscal income from Khalisa villages . . .	1,00,000
2 "Dhooah" or hearth tax . . .	1,00,000
3 "Angah", a body tax on men and animals . . .	2,00,000
4 "Sayer" imposts . . .	75,000
5 "Pusaeti", plough tax at Rs 5 per plough . . .	1,25,000
6 "Malbah", land tax at Rs 2 per 100 bighas . . .	50,000
Total	6,50,000

Over and above these normal items a triennial tax ("Dhatoie") of Rs 5 per plough, and the very frequent compulsory contributions, "Dind" and "Khoosali" were the means by which Soorut Singh was known to double his fixed revenue. That is, the total income in the early part of the nineteenth century may be taken as Rs 13,00,000

Per Capita taxation in 1887-88

Tod estimated the population at the time at

* Tod's Rajasthan p 208

Rs. 5,39,250. The income of Rs. 13,00,000 spread over this population comes to Rs. 2-4-0 per head per annum.

The Budget of 1887-88 *

In the intervening seventy years, the British system of administration was gradually introduced. The Thakurs' services were commuted into cash called 'Rekh'. New sources of income were initiated, such as, salt, excise, court fee, registration. Customs duties were regularised and yielded more than previously because of safety and security in the trade route. The Budget of 1887-88 may therefore be taken as the basis for a comparison with the subsequent ones, and the Income and Expenditure are therefore given below in full. Maharaja Dungar Singh died during this year and there was an extraordinary expenditure of nearly Rs. 3,57,000 incurred on account of his funeral ceremony.

Item.	Income under Head	Amount Rs.
1. Land Revenue and 'Rekh'	7,17,339
2. Other Taxes, etc.	8,681
3. Gardens	212
4. Customs duties	6,15,521
5. Salt	69,443
6. Excise, etc.	3,246
7. Mint	1,073
8. Court Fees	66,817
9. Process Fees	6,838
10. Registration	21,444
11. Nazrana and Peshcush	4,484
12. Gaiwal	2,081
13. Rajke Dhanke Babat	6,057
14. Sajji (Soda plant)	342
15. Miscellaneous levies	2,672
16. Interest, Hundi, etc.	33,502

*History of Bikaner in Hindi by Sohan Lal pp. 250 and 251.

17	Debt collection	4,393
18	House rents	387
19	Mela Lazima	2 091
20	Miscellaneous	21,396
21	Fuller's earth stone mines	14,474
22	City conservancy	12,797

Total	16,15,319
-------	-----------

Item	Expenditure under Head	Amount Rs
1	Devasthan Punyarth	4,170
2	Palaces (and 6 Mohurs)	1,57 379
3	Mahkamajat	1,09,705
4	Army	1,41,012
5	Police	92,944
6	Customs	53,966
7	Mint	620
8	Gardens	18,457
9	Salt	7 067
10	Karkhanajat	2 53 830
11	Pensions	2,327
12	Jail	17,777
13	Hospital	11,453
14	City Conservancy	8,595
15	Madresah, Schools	7 818
16	Postages	10 224
17	P W D	2 13,430
18	Vakils	14 277
19	Other expenses	200
20	Travelling expenses	1,836
21	Interest, etc	748
22	Extraordinary expenditure (fu- neral)	3,36,829
23	Customs compensation	38 545
24	Agent's expense	32 842
Total		15,72,059

Per Capita Taxation in 1887-88

Although this is not the orthodox method of calculation, in the absence of proper statistics and of details in the income heads, it might roughly be said that the whole of the income came from the general public. The census of 1891 is taken to be the first accurate one, as "the census became a regular organisation only from that year." And the population was 8,32,065. The income distributed over the population yields a figure of nearly Rs 2 per capita. It may be noted that in the early nineteenth century both income and population were estimated by Tod, and both figures being more accurate in the present case, the calculated per capita taxation of Rs 2 is the proper basis to start with in studying the development of taxation in Bikaner during the last half century. The heads of expenditure in the above table are better left for consideration under the appropriate section later.

Budgets and administration reports

The Bikaner Durbar do not publish the budget for general information. During recent years Hindi copies have been placed at the disposal of members of the Bikaner Legislature but always a day previous to the Budget session extending over two or three days. As recorded in the Assembly Proceedings, the members always complain about the shortness of time, which robs them of the opportunity of studying the budget, and the Finance Minister invariably replies as Major Maharaj Sri Narayan Singhji Sahib, officiating Home Minister did on the 19th December, 1929. He said:—

* Census of India, 1931, Vol. I, Bikaner State. Published 1934 p. 8.

'Seth Ram Ratan Das Bagri stated, in his speech that he was not able to study the budget carefully as copies of the budget were received a little late. Perhaps he might remember that last year also Seth Shub Karan had, during discussion on the budget, while inviting the attention of Government to this point, said that copies of the budget should be made available to the members one week in advance to enable them to study it well, when I had said in reply to it that efforts would be made to distribute copies of budgets accordingly as far as possible. I regret that there has been delay this year also, but in future efforts will be made as far as possible to make copies of budgets available to members beforehand" *

It is said that the members have the same complaint in 1939-40. It is inconceivable that with the modern paraphernalia of Ministers, Secretaries, and a complete Secretariat, which is being paid for by the tax-payer, copies of the budget are not made available to the members of the Assembly. If it is not the intention of the Durbar to have the Assembly as a mere show in order to convince people that Bikaner has representative Government, ample opportunity should be presented to the members, so that they may study the budget thoroughly and discuss its many intricacies intelligently.

Administration reports are not regularly published and made available to the public. The writer approached a very high official last June, who replied that the last five years' consolidated report was in the press, and that proofs were awaiting approval. That would be the report for the five years from 1934-35 to 1938-39. Nevertheless, he came across a published report for 1935-36.

*Bikaner Legislative Assembly Proceedings, 1929-30 Session

It is beyond one's understanding why there should be so much secrecy and subterfuge in regard to these reports, and to copies of budgets, unless there is something to conceal from the public view. The people pay rents, taxes, etc. and must know how the money is spent, and the demand for these publications is legitimate, and it is to the best interests of the State to make them available to the public

Budget for 1935-36

The main heads of receipts and expenditure are incorporated as an appendix in the Report for 1935-36. No other report prior to the 1935-36 one is available, and consequently our comparative study may be usefully devoted to this, and it may be compared with the results obtained from the 1887-88 Budget. The total receipt for the year was Rs. 1,33,86,808. If we deduct the receipts from the commercial enterprises and capital sources, such as railway, coal, stone quarries, electrical department, waterworks etc., amounting to Rs. 44,80,609 there remains a sum of Rs. 89,06,199 which may be taken as general taxation paid by the people. The population in 1931 was 9,36,218. The per capita taxation is therefore Rs. 9-8-0, i.e., it has increased by 375% in half a century.

Gang Canal Development Work

The largest development works are no doubt the opening in 1927 of the Gang Canal system drawing water from the Sutlej Valley Project, and with a capital investment of nearly three crores of rupees, and the steady extension of the Bikaner State Railway of 882 miles with a capital investment of three and a half crores. The canal has brought more than six lakhs bighas of land under irrigation and has attracted over one lakh of colo-

nists from the Punjab Land and water rates collected from the Gang Canal area naturally fall on the population thereof which, according to the 1931 census is 1,45,259 The collections during 1935-36 were as follows

	Rs
Water Rate	14,88,202
Crop Rate	7,56,431
All other revenues proportionate according to population	10,06,645
	<hr/> 32 51,278 <hr/>

This yields a per capita figure of Rs 22 38 which is entirely too high To begin with, 3,34,976 bighas of raj land were sold to these colonists for Rs 3,66 21 361 at an average price of nearly Rs 110 per bigha These colonists soon discovered that the productivity of the soil is not such as to enable them to realize the price and at the same time to pay the high rents and water rates, and in consequence there is a good deal of discontent among them and they have made several representations to the Durbar Incidentally it is worthy of note that the entire capital expenditure on the canal system has been realized within nine years by the sale of raj lands And the water rates now collected, after provision for running expenses, must be taken as clear profit

There is still another way of viewing this Gang Canal problem The total area irrigated in 1935-36 is stated in the Administration Report to be 6 06,767 bighas The total assessment of water rate and crop rate given above yields an average figure of Rs 3-11-0 per bigha As will be seen in Chapter X of this study, the crop yields even under irrigation are extremely poor in comparison with

other parts of India. If we refer to the table on page 81, we find that the total value of all crops grown on 101 *bighas* of cultivator 'E' in Gangana-Gar Nazamat was Rs. 375, i.e., an annual crop yield worth Rs. 3-11-0 per *bigha*. The whole of the produce goes in payment of rates, and there is nothing left for food and clothes and other necessities and for indirect taxes. It will therefore be noted in the same table that the total debts of cultivator 'E', amounting to Rs. 1,800 at the beginning of the crop year under reference, mount up at the end of the year's operations, to Rs. 2,200, not counting the interest.

In India, proper statistics of cost of cultivation, yield, etc. are not available, which alone would furnish average figures for comparison. It is still more difficult in the Indian States. Nevertheless, whatever statistics are available in the State publications amply corroborate the contention of the Gang Canal colonists that the price paid for the land, and the crop and water rates paid by them annually are far from being commensurate with the crop yield.

This development work in a desert is certainly an admirable enterprise, and no effort should be spared for making it a commercial success, so that it might be a model for other promising localities. A price of Rs. 110 per *bigha* is undoubtedly out of all proportion. In developing a new land project it is customary in many parts of India to give the fallow land free to the cultivators, or to charge a nominal fee as *salami* on suitable terms, such as, rent-free for three or five years, and then the levy of a nominal rent, which is gradually increased according as the cultivator is able to establish himself in the new surroundings. Judging from the many suspensions of payment of land prices; a

well as of rents and water rates, it is evident that the State had overlooked these well-known principles of land development. It is therefore considered highly desirable to put forward a suggestion here that the Maharaja's government should immediately appoint a commission fully representative of the cultivators in the canal colony to make a thorough investigation of the productivity of the soil under irrigation, and to fix the crop and water rates equitably to the benefit of both parties. It may be found necessary to considerably reduce the price of the land, and to refund the amounts to the owners, who have been extremely unfortunate in that the world-wide depression in prices set in shortly after they moved into the lands, and in the many vicissitudes that they have gone through in the early years of development. In this way for his courageous enterprise, be of enduring value alone will the credit that is due to the Maharaja not only to the State, but to the whole country.

Per Capita Taxation for Remaining Population

By deducting the figures of population and revenue as above from those of the entire State, we arrive at the following figures

Population exclusive of Gang Canal		
area		7,90,959
Revenue exclusive of Gan Canal		
area	..	Rs 56,54,921

The taxation per capita deduced from these figures is Rs 7-2-5. The increase in taxation since 1887-88 is therefore 257%. Except for the increase in the cultivated area, due to the Gang Canal, which has been already accounted for, there is no increase in cultivation in the other parts of the State. The population increase in 1931 over 1891 is only 1,04,153, which is entirely due to immigration of the colonists from the

Punjab, and yet the revenue receipts have increased so extraordinarily in fifty years.* The reason for this is to be found elsewhere.

Some Natable Increases

The comparative figures and the percentage increase are given below:—

Heads of Receipts	1887,88 Rs.	1935/36 Rs.	% Increase
1. Land Revenue	7,17,339	16,61,359	132
2. Miscellaneous revenue	8,681	2,02,332	2,231
3. Customs duties	6,15,521	18,51,536	200
4. Excise	3,246	14,70,225	45,194
5. Forest	nil	6,441	6,441
6. Police-cattle pounds	nil	50,185	50,185

As will be noted in a subsequent chapter, cultivation in the desert sand with scanty rainfall is entirely uneconomic, but rents have been increased enormously. There has never been any settlement in these areas, and the complaint is often heard that arbitrary enhancement of rent takes place. The land revenue demand of Tibi Pargana was Rs. 14,291 in 1861, when the British Government granted it for services rendered in 1857. In 1935-36 the demand is stated in the Administration Report to be Rs. 30,688. The increase is therefore 115 per cent in 75 years. Pasture grounds have not been provided for in the villages, and a new tax, called "Bhoonga" on all kinds of cattle is levied at the following rates in both Khalsa and Pattadars' areas:—

	Rs.	a.	p.	
Camel	5	0	0	per annum.
Buffalo	3	0	0	"
Cow and bullock	2	0	0	"
Goat and sheep	0	6	0	"

*The cultivated areas discussed here refer only to the Khalsa villages which cover one third of the State, the remaining two-thirds belonging to the Pattadars, and about which no information is available to the State.

These rates fluctuate from place to place, and are sometimes increased, and at other times decreased. This is included under head 'Miscellaneous Revenue and Duties'. The senior and junior Maharajkumars were married some years previously and the extraordinary expenditures from State revenues were Rs 5,02,047 and Rs 3,52,384 respectively*. In addition to the State expenditure, 'Neota' a levy from the people for weddings in the raj family was still being assessed and collected in 1935-36. To quote from page 32 of the Administration report for this year —

"160 Neota. A sum of Rs 17,144 was the balance of assessment at the end of the previous year on account of the Neota for the Heir-Apparent's auspicious Wedding, while further assessment during the year amounted to Rs 743 bringing up the total to Rs 17,887. Out of this amount a sum of Rs 994 was recovered during the year, leaving a balance of Rs 16,893 recoverable at the end of the year."

This is supposed to be a voluntary contribution, but the willingness and ability to pay can be gauged from the large balance still remaining seven or eight years after the wedding. This levy is also included under head 'Miscellaneous Revenue and Duties'.

Customs Duties

The system of customs tariff prevalent in this State as also in every other Rajputana State, is not meant for protection of, or fostering, industries inside the State. It is purely for revenue purposes. But, the people of the State have to pay

* Budget speech of Maharaj Sri Narayan Singhji for 1929-30

such import duties twice for most articles, whether manufactured in India or in a foreign country. They have to pay a higher price than in the provinces for the privilege of living in the State. With regard to export duties, it is inequitable to levy further sums on agricultural produce and cattle, which are already heavily taxed in one or more ways. Compared with the tariff duties are generally higher. Sugar, for instance, pays an import duty of Re. 1/- per maund in Jaipur, while it pays Rs. 4/- in Bikaner. Imported mill cloths are liable to a duty of Rs. 3 1/2% ad valorem in Bikaner, but of Rs. 6 1/4% in Bikaner. The most important consideration to remember in this matter is the fact that these customs barriers cut up India into numerous small units, and hamper trade. Every article from one State exported into another has to pay export duty in the former, as well as import duty in the latter. Under these conditions the surplus cotton of Jaipur cannot be marketed in Bikaner, because it has to pay an export duty of Re. 1 1/4 in the former and an import duty of Re. 1 1/8 in the latter.

Now, let us examine how the 200 per cent increase in customs duties has been obtained in order to increase the revenues. The table below details the main articles of export which are the produce of the land, and those of import, which the masses must have in order to clothe themselves, and to supplement their meagre larder obtained from the desert sand. The import duties have remained intact throughout the long period of famine from 1937-38 to 1939-40, when hardly any crops matured, and almost all food-stuffs, oil-seeds, oil, etc., had to be imported to feed the people.

**COMPARISON OF THE SCALES OF DUTIES IN
FORCE IN 1887-1888 and 1939-1940.***

No.	Name of article	Per unit	Import		Export		% inc.
			1887/88	1939/40	1887/88	1939/40	
			Rs. a p.	Rs. a p.	Rs. a p.	Rs. a p.	
1.	Rice	maund	0-8-0	0-12-0	—	—	50
2.	Wheat Floor	"	0-3-0	1-0-0	—	—	433
3.	Indian cloths †	"	1-8-0	3-2-0	—	—	108
	Gur (unrefined sugar)	"	0-9-0	1-5-3	—	—	136
5.	Sugar	"	2-0-0	4-0-0	—	—	100
6.	Cotton (cleaned)	"	1-4-0	1-8-0	—	—	20
7.	Smoking Tobacco	"	1-0-0	3-2-0	—	—	212
8.	Chewing Tobacco and snuff	"	1-0-0	7-8-0	—	—	650
9.	Opium	"	90-0-0	500-0-0	—	—	455
10.	Wool, uncleaned and loose	"	—	—	2-0-0	4-8-0	125
11.	Camels	Head	—	—	3-0-0	5-0-0	66
12.	Bullocks	"	—	—	0-10-0	1-8-0	140
13.	Cows‡	"	—	—	—	5-0-0	—
14.	Sheep, goats		—	—	0-1-6	0-6-0	300

* The 1887/88 tariff is taken from Sohan Lal's Hindi History of Bikaner pp. 330—333 and that in force now from a published sheet "Customs Tariff of the Bikaner State" without date, but later than 1928.

† The present duty is Rs. 6-4-0% ad valorem, and a maund of ordinary cloth will be worth about Rs. 50.

‡ There was probably an embargo on the export of cows in 1887/88.

enormous increases were not effected, but from time to time, and the cumulation of enhancements during fifty years is this table. For instance, the duty on 10 annas per maund in 1920*, and now annas. Country tobacco for smoking was an import duty of Rs. 2-8-0 per maund, it pays Rs. 3-2-0. Refined sugars were Rs. 3 per maund and now the duty is Rs.4.

is one of the principal items in the of the Excise Department. Till about ten ago it was included in the Customs Department. The quantity of opium imported per at the end of the nineteenth century is

But, its import in 1926-27 amounted maunds, 1 seer, $\frac{1}{2}$ chhatak. The population the time was about seven lakhs, and the per mille of population per annum to 64 $\frac{3}{4}$ lbs., which is very high. In another

State, Bharatpur, consumption in 1938-2 $\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. per mille of population. It is said

Rajputs are a decaying people on account of the use of opium and liquor. Maharaja Sir Singh often takes pride in the fact that he

the revenue of the State from some lakhs of rupees to a crore and a half. The

have already been analysed with regard revenue, miscellaneous duties and customs which have no grounds for justification. Increase in excise takes one's breath away, a gross abuse of the Abkari Act, which is to regulate the consumption of excisable and not to encourage people to

and more intoxicants so that the exchequer might be enriched. It is wrong for any government to dope the people with opium and liquor. They should call a halt to this policy, and find out ways and means to reduce the consumption gradually with the ultimate objective of total prohibition, and the government must come forward to support such attempts.

The two minor items, Forest and Cattle Pounds are innovations during the present ruler's regime and add to the trials and the burdens of the villagers. The income from forest comes only from grass in some specified areas which are reserved. Grazing is allowed on payment of fees by the cattle owners. The income from ninety-three cattle pounds in the police stations comes from fines and feeding charges for the impounded cattle. 50,664 head of cattle were taken back by the owners on payment of an average of a little less than one rupee per head to meet these charges. The hardship caused to the owners is evident from the fact that as many as 9,417 head, i.e., 15 per cent of the total impounded, remained unclaimed and were auctioned for Rs 10,949*. It is curious that a sum of Rs 18,098-7-6 was collected as feeding charges but the total expenditure in the cattle pounds is stated to be Rs 11,421-7-6. One may question as to what source some seven thousand rupees worth of feed come from. 'The net savings were Rs 38,764-5-9 as against Rs 31,049-4-9 of the previous year'. This new item of burden on the people is on the up grade every year.

Conveyance of Immovable Property

Another innovation is the 25 per cent duty on the conveyance of immovable property in Bikaner.

* Report on the Administration of the Bikaner State for 1935-36 p. 59

City and other towns. The duty is assessed not only on the value of the land, but also on that of the buildings and houses standing thereon. It is popularly known as the 'black' tax, because it is said, that in the neighbouring State of Jodhpur the duty is assessed only on the value of the land, and that too at a far lower rate. In Bikaner the duty is collected every time a piece of property changes hands, in some cases more than one change being recorded in one year. The collections from this source in 1935-36 were:

1. Conveyance of immovable property in the capital	Rs. 49,623
2. Conveyance of immovable property in the districts	59,445
<hr/>	
Total	1,09,068

EXPENDITURE

The Privy Purse

It is widely believed that the Maharaja of Bikaner takes 10 per cent of the revenue for his privy purse. But, the basis of revenues is misleading inasmuch as the percentage is calculated on gross receipts which contain many items of commercial enterprise having large incomes as well as large expenditures. For instance, the receipts from the State Railway amounted to Rs. 38,32,805-4-8 and the expenditure to Rs. 27,57,850-8-9, leaving a net profit of Rs. 10,74,954-11-11. There are also items under Extraordinary Receipts, such as, Railway Provident Fund amounting to Rs. 1,26,449 which is not a revenue receipt. Capital Receipts from sale of land and of occupancy rights are in a similar category, as they constitute capital in a more fluid shape, and are non-recurring. Such capital is meant for investment in productive works, and

and more intoxicants so that the exchequer might be enriched. It is wrong for any government to dope the people with opium and liquor. They should call a halt to this policy, and find out ways and means to reduce the consumption gradually with the ultimate objective of total prohibition, and the government must come forward to support such attempts.

The two minor items, Forest and Cattle Pounds are innovations during the present ruler's regime and add to the trials and the burdens of the villagers. The income from forest comes only from grass in some specified areas which are reserved. Grazing is allowed on payment of fees by the cattle owners. The income from ninety-three cattle pounds in the police stations comes from fines and feeding charges for the impounded cattle. 50,664 head of cattle were taken back by the owners on payment of an average of a little less than one rupee per head to meet these charges. The hardship caused to the owners is evident from the fact that as many as 9,417 head, i.e., 15 per cent of the total impounded, remained unclaimed and were auctioned for Rs 10,949*. It is curious that a sum of Rs 18,098-7-6 was collected as feeding charges, but the total expenditure in the cattle pounds is stated to be Rs 11,421-7-6. One may question as to what source some seven thousand rupees worth of feed come from. "The net savings were Rs 38,764-5-9 as against Rs 31,049-4-9 of the previous year." This new item of burden on the people is on the up-grade every year.

Conveyance of Immovable Property

Another innovation is the 25 per cent duty on the conveyance of immovable property in Bikaner.

* Report on the Administration of the Bikaner State for 1935-36 p. 59

City and other towns. The duty is assessed not only on the value of the land, but also on that of the buildings and houses standing thereon. It is popularly known as the 'black' tax, because it is said, that in the neighbouring State of Jodhpur the duty is assessed only on the value of the land, and that too at a far lower rate. In Bikaner the duty is collected every time a piece of property changes hands, in some cases more than one change being recorded in one year. The collections from this source in 1935-36 were:

1. Conveyance of immovable property in the capital	Rs. 49,623
2. Conveyance of immovable property in the districts	59,445
	<hr/>
Total	1,09,068

EXPENDITURE

The Privy Purse

It is widely believed that the Maharaja of Bikaner takes 10 per cent of the revenue for his privy purse. But, the basis of revenues is misleading inasmuch as the percentage is calculated on gross receipts which contain many items of commercial enterprise having large incomes as well as large expenditures. For instance, the receipts from the State Railway amounted to Rs. 38,32,805-4-8 and the expenditure to Rs. 27,57,850-8-9, leaving a net profit of Rs. 10,74,954-11-11. There are also items under Extraordinary Receipts, such as, Railway Provident Fund amounting to Rs. 1,26,449 which is not a revenue receipt. Capital Receipts from sale of land and of occupancy rights are in a similar category, as they constitute capital in a more fluid shape, and are non-recurring. Such capital is meant for investment in productive works, and

THE ACTUAL PRIVY PURSE

No.	Particulars	Under head expenditure	Rs
		Palace	15,35,624
1.	Privy Purse	Devasthan	68,819
2.	Gifts to poets, pandits and others.	Gardens	52,432
3.	Gardens attached to the Palaces.		
4.	Additions and alterations to Lalgarh Palace and furnishing and equipping.	Extraordinary	1,50,999
5.	Edcn. of nobles' sons at Mayo College.	Education	5,624
6.	Excess expense on Nobles' Girls' School.	"	10,000
7.	Staff of the two princes	"	22,152
8.	Three surgeons in Palace Hospital.	Medical	11,508
9.	Maintenance of Bilkaner-Gajner road.	Buildings and Roads	5,130
10.	Electric current for Lalgarh Palace.	Electrical and Mechanical	1,020
11.	Electric current for Old Fort.	"	1,740
12.	Two wells in Lalgarh and Old Fort.	"	3,000
13.	Sprinkling of roads.	Buildings and Roads	2,293
14.	Karkhanas, Motor dept., Farrashkhana	Reception Department	82,494
15.	Presents, gifts, rewards, miscellaneous	Miscellaneous expenses	1,25,738
16.	Expenditure on Maharaja's tours and on reception of personal guests.	Extraordinary	1,37,489
		Total	22,16,062

not for distribution among the various beneficiaries. However, it is not deemed necessary here to consider the inclusion or exclusion of the gross receipts on commercial enterprises. Hence if we deduct only the capital receipts from sale of land, etc., and the Railway Provident Fund, we arrive at a figure for gross receipts of Rs 1,26,55,740. The Maharaja's privy purse, under head "Palace," of Rs 15,35,624 is 12.1 per cent, while on a calculation on the entire receipts of Rs 1,33,86,808, the privy purse comes to 11.5 per cent. The privy purse therefore is not fixed at 10 per cent on the showing of the budget itself.

The Actual Privy Purse in 1935-36

A privy purse is understood to be an allowance from the public revenue to the ruler for all his private expenses as distinct from State expense. But, it is not the case in the Indian States. It may be remarked here that in the matter of expenditure older customs are preserved along with the latest things of the western world. Chariots and elephants are there for purposes of show on perhaps half a dozen occasions in the year. And the fast motor cars have become a necessity in this age. But, the two cannot go together, they only increase the expenditure. The following items of expenditure were incurred on account of the ruler and therefore should not be charged to the revenues of the State. The actual privy purse can therefore be obtained by adding these items.

No.	Particulars	THE ACTUAL PRIVY PURSE
1.	Privy Purse	
2.	Gifts to poets, pandits and others.	
3.	Gardens attached to the Palaces.	
4.	Additions and alterations to the Palaces.	
5.	Palace and furnishing and equipping to Lalgarh	
6.	Edcn. of nobles' sons at Mayo College.	
7.	Excess expense on Nobles' Girls' College.	
8.	Staff of the two princes	
9.	Three surgeons in Palace Hospital.	
10.	Maintenance of Bikaner-Gajner road.	
11.	Electric current for Lalgarh Palace.	
12.	Two wells in Lalgarh and Old Fort.	
13.	Sprinkling of roads.	
14.	Karkhanas, Motor dept., Farrashkhana	
15.	Presents, gifts, rewards, miscellaneous	
16.	Expenditure on Maharaja's tours and on reception of personal guests.	

Under head expenditure	Rs
Palace	15,35,624
Devasthan	68,819
Gardens	52,432
Extraordinary	1,50,999
Education	5,624
"	10,000
Medical	22,152
Buildings and Roads	11,508
Electrical and Mechanical	5,130
"	1,020
"	1,740
Buildings and Roads	3,000
Reception Department	2,293
Miscellaneous expenses	82,494
Extraordinary	1,25,738
Total	1,37,489
	22,16,062

Poets pandits and astrologers afford pleasure to the Maharaja. They are of no use to the State. All the gardens are attached to the palaces, and the people derive no benefit from them. The additions and alterations to Lalgarh Palace were undertaken to build a new wing for the grandson. Only Pattadars' sons are sent up to the Mayo College, and the expenditure on this account should properly be met by the Pattadars or by the Maharaja himself. The expenditure on Nobles' Girls' School for about fifty girls is Rs 18,000, while the Girls' School for all other classes, with from 300 to 350 girls is Rs 8,000. If it is necessary to maintain a separate school for the daughters of the nobles, the excess expenditure should be on account of the nobles or of the Maharaja. The Staff of the two princes consists of a European tutor, two Sardars and a Hindi tutor. In the Civil and Military List a Senior Surgeon, a second surgeon and a third surgeon are listed. Only the salaries of these total Rs 11,508. Salaries of other staff and the cost of medicines and equipment are not available, and therefore not included in the above list. The Bikaner-Gajner Road is for the use of the Maharaja and his guests, when they go to Gajner for hunting, and is not used by the people. Water is sprinkled on roads only when the Maharaja and his guests pass. Karkhanas are stables for horses and elephants, and for housing chariots, which should be maintained on the Maharaja's own account. All motors are for the Maharaja's use, and not for the officers. Tents, durries, etc stored in Farrashkhana are for Maharaja's use, and are lent only to the rulers of other States. Presents, gifts, rewards, etc are personal from, or to, the Maharaja. 'Miscellaneous' consists of maintenance of palaces, bungalows at Gajner, Sujangarh, Chhapar, Hanumangarh and other

places for the Maharaja's stay for *shikar*, etc.

The Extraordinary expenditure was incurred for the Maharaja's visit to Palanpur on the occasion of the wedding of the heir-apparent of Palanpur (Rs. 18,892), for the Governor of Madras' visit to Bikaner (Rs. 6,539), and for Miscellaneous (Rs. 1,12,058). It is strange that such a large sum is undefined and placed under 'Miscellaneous'. It is said that the expenses incurred on the Maharaja's tours outside, and those for the reception of the distinguished guests are lumped together under this omnibus head. In 1935-36 thirty gentlemen and ladies, Indian and European, incumbent and retired officials of the Government of India, Maharajas and Maharanis, public men from England and India, visited the State as the Maharaja's guests. Only two among them, the Political Secretary to the Government of India, and the military Adviser-in-Chief, Indian States Forces may be called State guests, while none of the others can be said to have any State business. The Maharaja spent 12 days in four tours to different places in the State, while his fourteen visits outside the State consumed 59 days, out of which 15 days only may be considered as spent in State business, while the remaining 44 days were spent in shooting in Bhopal, Datia, Neemuch, Narsingarh and Kotah, and in social visits and pleasure trips to Danta, Palanpur, Baroda and Bombay. The expenses on these latter trips are chargeable to the privy purse.

Although there are some more minor items which are not shown in detail in the Report, and therefore cannot be determined, we may safely take the sum of Rs. 22,16,062 as the actual privy purse for the year 1935-36. This is 16.6 per cent on the total revenue receipts, as they are called, of

Rs 1,33,86 808 But, as we have already analysed and found the real revenue receipts to be Rs 1,26 55,740, the actual percentage of the privy purse is 17 5 per cent

Increase Since 1887-88

In that year the expenditure under head 'Palaces' was Rs 1,57,379, and it was nearly 10 percent of the total revenue receipts The increase under this head in 50 years is 1 308 per cent

Mr E S Montague (Secretary of State for India, 1917-1922) records on pages 236-7 of his Indian Diary (Heinemann, 1930) written during his tour in India in 1917-18, thus

"In the evening Bikaner came to see me I asked how many Native States had separate civil lists, and he said, "Very few" He himself has He takes five per cent of the revenues, but they give him some motor cars, some electric light, some furniture for his Palaces, and so forth, but taking it as an inclusive sum, he thinks it will work out at under 10 per cent He says that when he came to the throne, he only got, under the arrangement, one lakh a year, now he gets three lakhs, and he has only succeeded in saving 30 lakhs in 20 years, which is his whole personal property, although 21 lakhs of this was a debt recovered, through the Government of India, from the State, of money which had been wrongfully taken by the State from his mother This confirms my impression that India is a cheap country for a rich man, although a dear country for a poor man "

Judging from this and from the increase in leaps and bounds of the gross revenues from Rs.58,03,699 in 1916-17 to Rs.1,30,67,600 in 1939-40, the Maharaja's personal estate will now be in the neighbourhood of two crores of rupees. One may justifiably raise the question if the ruler of the State should amass wealth for himself in this fashion, instead of expanding the nation-building departments, and of creating a sufficiently large famine fund in order to meet the terror of famine that visits the State every three or four years, and in the present case for three continuous years.

Viceroy's Salary Compared

The average per capita income of the citizens of the United States of America is Rs. 1,080, and the revenue receipts of the Government are about ten times those of the Government of India, yet the annual salary of their President is fixed at Rs. 2,25,000. The per capita income in India is variously estimated at between Rs. 36 and Rs. 75. But, the Viceroy of India receives a salary of Rs. 2,56,000 per annum, which is entirely disproportionate. The difference is that in the United States, the people's representatives have fixed the salary for the President on a reasonable scale, while in the case of India, the British parliament has statutorily fixed the Viceroy's salary, and the people of India have no say in the matter. If the salary drawn by the Viceroy is pronounced as disproportionate, how much more so is the actual privy purse of the Maharaja of Bikaner. It amounts to nine times the salary of the Viceroy, and is entirely unreasonable. And every man, woman and child, with an annual per capita income of perhaps below Rs. 36, pays Rs. 2-6-0 per annum for the upkeep of the ruler and his family.

MAIN ITEMS OF EXPENDITURE IN 1935-36

Keeping the above analysis in view, the main items of expenditure out of the total revenue receipts may now be presented in the following table.

No.	Heads of expenditure	Sub heads		Main heads	
		Rs.	%	Rs.	%
1.	Actual privy purse	—	—	22,16,062	17.5
2.	Direct demands on revenue, land revenue, stamps, etc.	—	—	13,05,949	10.3
3.	State Railway	—	—	27,57,850	21.8
4.	Irrigation	—	—	3,53,285	2.8
5.	Minerals	—	—	48,584	0.4
6.	Civil Administration	—	—	5,44,566	4.3
7.	Protection—	—	—	6,60,962	5.2
	Administration of Justice	1,27,352	1.0	—	—
	Jail	61,930	0.5	—	—
	Police	4,71,678	3.7	—	—
8.	Beneficent Departments:			5,46,775	4.3
	Direction and inspection of education	34,968	0.3	—	—
	College and secondary education	1,76,534	1.4	—	—
	Primary education	34,920	0.3	—	—
	Total education	2,46,422	2.0	—	—
	Medical	2,20,969	1.7	—	—
	Sanitation	2,632	0.02	—	—
	Works of public utility	53,439	0.4	—	—
	Agricultural Experimental Farm	15,282	0.1	—	—
	Cooperative Credit Societies	4,546	0.04	—	—
	Veterinary Hospital	3,485	0.03	—	—
9.	Industries and commerce	—	—	1,864	0.01
10.	Debt services — Interest	—	—	65,815	0.5
11.	Army	—	—	7,09,810	5.6
12.	Public Work Department	—	—	6,80,915	5.4
	Buildings and Roads	3,68,573	2.9	—	—
	Electrical and Mechanical Department	2,87,480	2.3	—	—
	Waterworks	24,862	0.2	—	—
13.	Extraordinary — Flood Preventive and protective works, artesian well, etc.	—	—	1,53,809	1.2
	Total recurring	—	—	1,00,46,246	79.4
	Balance to capital expenditure, repayment of loan and Reserve and Sinking Fund.			26,09,494	20.6
	Total Revenue Receipts			1,26,55,740	100.0

The most notable feature of the expenditure is that the total spent on all the beneficent departments is less than a quarter of the actual purse and lower than the army expenditure by 1.3 per cent.

Heavy Administration

The Prime Minister receives a salary of 4,000 per month. The European Home and Public Works Minister draws in salary and allowances Rs. 2,300. Two Ministers receive Rs. 1,500 each, one Rs. 1,300 and one Rs. 900, and the annual demand on the seven Ministers is Rs. 1,47,600, of which the Chief Justice of the High Court draws Rs. 750 each. There are nineteen European officers, including those in the Railways, drawing a total of Rs. 23,181 per month. The salaries of five of them lie within the range of Rs. 1,000 and Rs. 2,000, and of five others in the range of Rs. 2,000 and Rs. 3,000. The European and four Indian officers are on the Government of India. These are a portion of the high salaries, which are entirely out of the income of the people. Barring a few Thakurs and other Rajputs all the big and responsible posts are held by Europeans and Indians from outside the State, and the people have no share in these posts. To pay the taxes have no share in these posts. It is a sad commentary on the forty years of the rule of Sir Ganga Singh's administration that the sons of the soil have not yet been prepared to shoulder the responsibility of managing their own affairs.

Lieut. A. H. E. Boileau, a member of a political mission to Bikaner and other States, writing in

1835 about the delicate beauty of the interior of the Gaj-mahal at Bikaner, says, 'This is about almost the only branch of art, in cultivating which large sums have been lavished by the various Rajas, and this too for the mere reason that it is conducive to their personal comfort as well as to their future glory'* Sodhi Hukm Singh lists sixty-two palaces and buildings inside the fort—"the work of successive Rajas and Maharajas, nearly every one of whom has contributed something"*** Some contain gold work in them Some have what is called Pach-chi-Kari work Others are ornamented with China tiles or gold and lacquer Maharaja Dungar Singh, the immediate predecessor of the present Maharaja, built seven palaces during his reign of fifteen years There were at least ten habitable palaces at the end of the nineteenth century Nevertheless, soon after Maharaja Ganga Singh came on the gaddi, his own Lalgarh palace was started In 1900-1901 about four lakhs of rupees was spent on it† The same report for 1902-1903 records an expenditure of Rs 2 55 112 for golden pinnacles, a new wing for guests, gymkhana and other works and furniture‡ Every year money has been lavished on it and we find further expenditure in 1935-36 already mentioned The money spent on it in forty years may add up to a crore of rupees Again in 1929 another palace called Bijay Bhavan costing from fifteen to twenty lakhs of rupees was opened, and a gala ceremony performed to which many Rajas

* A personal Narrative of a journey through Bikaner, Jodhpur and Jaisalmer by Lieut. A H E Boileau P 182

** Physical and Political Geography of Bikaner by Rai Bahadur Sodhi Hukm Singh. Pp 17-22

† Government of India Foreign Department Report on the Political Administration of the Rajputana States and Ajmer-Merwara for 1900-1901 P 40

‡ Ibid for 1902-1903 P 32

and Maharajas, Indian and European celebrities were brought as distinguished guests in special trains. Palaces in Bikaner constitute a large tunnel through which tax-payers' money flows.

Tika Ceremonies

The 1939-40 budget contains an expenditure of Rs. 33,200 for Tika ceremonies of the Maharaj-kumar's son and of the daughter of the late junior Maharajkumar, also of Rs. 24,056 under Roads and Buildings for the construction of a State Hotel.

Privy Purse in 1939-40 Budget

The estimated receipts were as follows:—

Rs.

Ordinary receipts from land revenue and other taxes, irrigation, railway, mines, etc.	1,30,61,600
Extraordinary receipts, such as Railway Provident Fund, etc.	14,51,300
Capital receipts from sale of land and occupancy rights	11,00,000
	<hr/>
Total	1,56,12,900
	<hr/>

The privy purse is stated to be Rs. 15,72,936, but if we add all the perquisites under other heads as in the 1935-36 budget, the actual privy purse mounts up to Rs. 22,55,937. On the ordinary receipts of Rs. 1,30,61,600 the actual privy purse works out at 17.3 per cent.

Villages Held by the Ladies of the Palace

In 1894 the ladies of the palace held fifty-five villages, yielding an income of Rs. 1,42,600 per annum. No mention of it is made in the report for the year 1935-36 if the ladies of the present generation are still in possession of these. But, the

usual custom in the States is that such villages are handed down from generation to generation

Other Sources of the Maharaja's Income

Every year on the days of Holi, Dussera, Dewali, Vasant Panchami, etc., the officials and wealthy merchants present *nazar* to the Maharaja and the proceeds go to the private purse. There are occasions when new Tazims are granted to rich men for some service rendered. One such, who met the entire expenses of the opening ceremony of the Gang Canal, in the neighbourhood of three lakhs of rupees, was recently awarded Tazim honours, i.e. the privilege of wearing gold anklets and of being received in court with honour.

Audit

For the receipt and expenditure of such a large sum of money there is no external and independent audit. An auditor in the service of the State carries out internal audit. But, when one is changed, the new auditor discovers large defalcations amounting from ten thousand to thirty thousand rupees. Such defalcations have come to light in the Police, Public Works, High Court and Barakhana (repository of State jewels, etc.) departments. The culprits, after years of embezzlement, are prosecuted and awarded sentences of imprisonment and fine.

Discrepancies in the Budget

While scrutinizing the budget for the year 1935-36 on pages 94-99 given as Appendix A in the "Report on the Administration of the Bikaner State for 1935-36", the following errors are discovered.

(a) The eight items in column "Accounts 1935-36" under head 'G Civil Administration,'

total up to Rs. 5,44,566-7-1 instead of Rs. 5,50,566-7-1 as printed, i.e. a difference of exactly Rs. 6,000.

(b) The total of the three items in the same column under head 'H. Protection' is Rs. 6,60,962-1-5 instead of Rs. 6,71,962-1-5, i.e. a difference of exactly Rs. 11,000.

Both these errors inflate the expenditure by a total of Rs. 17,000. Further errors in the addition of the main heads make it difficult to understand how the grand totals of the receipt side and the expenditure side have tallied with each other.

In several cases the total expenditure detailed in the report section of the department concerned is different from that given in the budget in Appendix A. For instance, in the report on Education on page 77, we read, "445. Expenditure. The total expenditure on Education was Rs. 2,92,367..". But the figure in the Budget under sub-head 26, Education, is Rs. 2,84,197-14-2. There are two different totals for the department, and it is impossible for the reader to tell which is correct. These errors and confusing figures vitiate a proper study of the report and budget, meagre as the detailed information is, and mar the value of the weighty publication.

CHAPTER VI

REPRESENTATIVE INSTITUTIONS

In a democracy the representative character of these institutions is judged by the franchise the people possess, and by the freedom of the people to express their opinion on various matters pertaining to the well-being of the community. The attention of the reader has already been drawn to the absence of freedom of speech, of press and of organisation in Bikaner. In the absence of these fundamental rights, legally suppressed with a very strong hand by the Public Safety Act, institutions like the Bikaner Legislative Assembly, the Municipalities and the District Boards are not representative bodies. The members of these bodies have no mandate from the people. Nor is the opportunity open to them for the purpose of ascertaining the desire of the people and their requirements. The title 'Legislative Assembly' is therefore a misnomer and a formidable weapon in the armoury of the autocratic government where-with a popular seal is made out to be given to all dangerous legislation, to the uneconomic taxation, and to the frivolous expenditure contained in the budget.

The Legislative Assembly

This institution was established as far back as 1913, and is claimed to consist of twenty-five nominated officials and non-officials and twenty elected members. The official block including ministers and departmental heads numbers thirteen. Of the twelve nominated non-officials, five are Rajvi and Tazimi Sardars representing one hundred and thirty Pattadars who are irrespon-

sible masters of two-thirds of the State, three are Seths, i.e. capitalists who have made good in trade and commerce outside the State and most of whom possess no agricultural interests, one is from the Bikaner Municipality and two are large landholders who are said to represent "agricultural classes" and one Pandit. The Pattadars again elect three Tazimi Sardars, Bikaner Municipality elects two, and eleven other municipalities ten, and all of these are Seths. Two Zamindars' Advisory Boards consisting of 35 members elect two members, and the Ganganagar (Gang Canal area) District Board three. The franchise for the municipalities is far too much restricted; and there too the State nominates many members. 79 per cent of the people of the State are engaged in agriculture, but they have no voice in this affair. Whatever election to the Legislative Assembly there is from the municipalities, it is indirect election by the nominated and elected members of the municipalities. The Legislative Assembly is therefore a packed house meant to carry out the behest of the Government of the Maharaja of Bikaner. In such a house it is no wonder that the Bikaner Public Safety Act and its amendments were passed without any opposition. In twenty-seven years of its existence no manner of opposition has developed. Copies of the budget are delivered to the members on the day previous to the debate, and the whole budget passed within a few hours. The Assembly meets for three days in the year.

Debate on the Budget

The level of debate on the all important event of the year may be judged from the following extracts from the speeches delivered. One member says:

“ In fine I would say that the financial condition of the State is progressing day by day and the present year's budget also shows that the condition seems to be quite hopeful and satisfactory. On behalf of this Assembly, this time I specially tender our grateful thanks to His Highness the Maharaja, His Highness' Government, and the Prime Minister and the Finance Department for preparing the budget this time in a new form with many details and explanatory notes annexed thereto, thereby making it easy to be grasped by the members of this House. The pains His Highness has taken in preparing all these details and in presenting the budget in a new form is quite obvious from viewing the budget and the members of the Assembly feel highly grateful for this. May God give our Maharaja sound health and long years. If it be not considered impertinence, I would also say that the incessant labour His Highness the Maharaja does every year in preparing budget and other works may be relaxed a little and devoted towards the preservation of health which will give us great pleasure.”

Another member, after praising some items of appropriation, concludes by saying,

“I have nothing special to mention in connection with the budget except that this year's budget is an occasion of great delight for us as it contains a provision for the estimated expenditure of the celebration of His Highness Sri Maharaj Kumarji Sahib's auspicious marriage, which auspicious marriage celebration has come after many years, and it would be an occasion of great delight for every loyal subject of the State.”

Member after member sings paeans of praise for the Maharaja, but only the member nominated from the agricultural classes mixes a little humour with his share of praise for the ruler. He says,

"... It has become a part of my life to tour round the villages from the north to the south and from the east to the west. Their difficulties present themselves before me. I am thankful to you for sanctioning the opening of five more schools every year for the next six years. This is a very gracious work. But to provide less food to one who is very hungry does not satisfy his hunger. I think the village population of this State numbers about six lakhs. In consideration of this, the budget allotment of Rs. 72,000 for the districts is mostly distributed over large towns. On behalf of the village population, I most humbly request that a still more liberal sum may kindly be kept in the budget for the education of this larger part of the State which is a very essential section of His Highness' dear subjects..."

In reply to this last humble request, the Prime Minister, who is the President of the Assembly says,

"... Education must be spread in villages and thus what Mr. Hari Chand has said is right as a matter of fact, but he should also bear in mind the difficulties and obstacles which were pointed out in my speech. First the villages are situated far apart. Schools cannot be opened in every village, for in one single village we can only expect five or ten boys to attend, and for such a small number a teacher cannot be engaged. Secondly, we will have to prepare trained teachers, as

education cannot make any headway without well-trained teachers. Hence, for such works expenditure can only be increased gradually."

It may be noted that five years after this, there is no mention in the Administration Report of a school for training teachers.

Last of all, the Maharaja in person delivers the closing speech covering nineteen and a half foolscap pages in which he criticises the Indian States Peoples' Conference for the part it played on behalf of the peoples of the States during the sittings of the Butler Committee and the controversy about the constitutional status of the States peoples to be represented in the Round Table Conference, and ends up in these words —

"In concluding the speech today, I would say to the overwhelming majority of the bona fide and loyal subjects of Indian States—have faith in your Rulers and Governments, they are fighting, and will continue to fight, your battles for you, their subjects, to the utmost power and ability, they are fighting for the whole State consisting of you as well as their Governments, and not for the selfish ends of the Princes or for any other unworthy motives."

How the Maharaja and other rulers were fighting their peoples' battles has already been described in the latter portion of Chapter II.

Maharaja's Golden Jubilee Boon

One of the sixteen boons declared by the ruler on the occasion of the golden jubilee of his reign and gazetted in the Extraordinary Gazette of the 30th October, 1937, was the addition of six more members to the Legislative Assembly to be elected.

by a general electorate, which would give the so-called elected element a majority of one. Three years have elapsed, and it is not even known what the general electorate is to be like.

Municipalities and District Boards

There are some twenty towns including Bikaner, and nineteen of them have municipalities. The Boards of five of these are entirely nominated, while in thirteen of them there is an elected majority, but the franchise is extremely restricted, and the property qualifications of the candidates for membership are too high. For instance, no one is eligible for candidature to the Municipal Board of Bikaner City unless he possesses landed property valued at Rs. 10,000. One of the Jubilee boons provided for Presidents of all Municipalities in the district towns to be elected by the members thereof. But, in every case the Magistrate, or the Tahsildar or some other official is allowed to stand as candidate and gets himself elected. The strangest feature is that the premier city of Bikaner has a nominated President. Most of the resolutions passed by these bodies are not given effect to. Only Bikaner City has some pucca and kitcha roads with drains. Some of these are not as satisfactory as city roads should be. In no other town are there roads and drains. In Churu, Rajgarh, Sardarshahr and Hanumangarh there is a stretch of ordinary metalled road from the station to the town. Out of five districts in the State only Ganganagar has a District Board consisting of fourteen nominated and forty-two elected members, and presided over by the Colonisation Minister.

CHAPTER VII

NATION-BUILDING WORK

Efforts of the Bikaner Government—Gang Canal

With more than eight-fold increase in the total revenue receipts during half a century, one would expect that the progress in education, sanitation, transport facilities, etc. would be at least commensurate with this increase. But the actual fact is otherwise. True it is that the present Maharaja has put through one of the most daring irrigation projects in a desert country at a cost of three crores of rupees, a good part of which was borrowed and later paid off. The main canal has a length of 90 miles from the Ferozepur head-works to the feeder above the Ghaggar bed, and all of this length is lined with concrete. The length of the feeder and distributories is 634 miles, and the Gang Canal commands a cultivable area of 6,20,000 acres. Under irrigation 1,36,000 acres of kharif and 2,40,000 acres of rabi crops are now grown annually. It is equally true that the railway expansion has been phenomenal, and the attempt at boring an artesian well evokes admiration. But, these are all profit-earning ventures. One wishes that the Maharaja's Government would employ the same daring in the branches of nation-building work which, to be sure, do not earn profits directly, but are for the ultimate good of the State and its people.

Education

It is already known that only 20% of the revenues was spent on education in 1935-36. But

the expenditure on primary education was only 0.3%. Thus primary education is entirely neglected, and the promises for more energetic efforts made from time to time are never carried out. That accounts for the extremely poor proportion of literacy in the State. Literacy per mille of male and female population in Bikaner according to the 1931 census is compared in the following table with similar figures in some Provinces and States.

Literates in some Provinces & States		
Province or State	Males per mille	Females per mille
Travancore	408	168
Baroda	331	79
Madras	219	25
Bengal	188	22
Mysore	174	33
Bombay	110	23
Central Provinces & Berar	110	11
Hyderabad	85	12
Bikaner	72	7

In Bikaner the number of literates per thousand of the total population (male and female) comes to 42 only. However, the matter is still more serious, when it is found that among the rural population only 21 per thousand can read and write.

Bikaner City has a first grade college in Arts and teaches up to Intermediate Standard in science. The State maintains only three High Schools, one of which is exclusively for the boys of the Pattadars. There are three privately endowed High Schools receiving aid from the State. Again, the number of Anglo-Hindi and Secondary

Hindi Schools for boys and for girls maintained by the State is 25, while those run by private parties is 40. The public are not apathetic towards educating their children. However, all of these institutions cater more or less to the needs of the urban population and of the non-agricultural classes. For the villagers' needs the State maintains only 62 primary schools while the private and district board schools number 154, making a total of 216 for the whole State. This was the situation up to 1935-36. Since then some additions have been made but the number is insignificant. The number of villages in 1931 was 2,742. Therefore, there is one primary school for every thirteen villages. As distances between the villages are very great in the desert, the absolute inadequacy of provision for the education of the rural population can be well appreciated from the fact that there is one primary school for every 108 square miles. This is a very unhappy state of affairs and the only conclusion one may draw is that the Maharaja's government wish to keep the people steeped in ignorance.

During recent years a compulsory primary education law has been enacted, applicable only to the municipal areas and the State undertakes to contribute more than half of the expenditure of schools opened in the municipal limits. But, this expenditure is not incurred, because the municipal boards do not have enough income to devote towards education. Attempts more serious than this are needed for this fundamental requirement of the villages.

Medical and Sanitation Services

Hospitals and dispensaries in the State number six and thirty-six respectively. But four of the hospitals are concentrated in Bikaner City,

efforts are therefore being made to plant as many trees as possible in the State" Forty-five years afterwards the State maintains four nurseries in the canal area, and one in Bikaner district which distributed some 20,000 seedlings to the cultivators. Neem and sheesham trees are growing luxuriantly in Jaipur and Jodhpur and should do as well in Bikaner. Money spent on tree-planting will be recouped many times in increasing rainfall and in bringing extensive cultivable areas under cultivation. Planting of trees is therefore very necessary in a desert. The Death Valley in Southern California, U S A was turned into a garden inside of twenty years by tree-planting, and Bikaner cannot be an exception to this rule. But more serious and planned work has to be done by the State than heretofore.

Industries

Wool is the most important commodity, taken off the sheep pastured in the desert. Tod records in the first quarter of the 19th century that "It is worked into every article of dress, both for men and women, and worn by all, rich and poor. It is produced from the loom, of every texture and quality from the coarse *lor* or blanket at three rupees per pair (six shillings) to thirty rupees. The quality of these last is very fine, of an intermediate texture between the shawl and camlet, and without any nap, it is always bordered with a stripe of chocolate brown or red. Of this quality are the *dopattas* or scarfs for the ladies. Turbans are also manufactured of it, and though frequently from forty to sixty-one feet in length, such is the fineness of the web, that they are not bulky on the head." But, alas, the weavers have lost this art entirely, as they have lost everywhere else in India! The Government of Bikaner has not been

behind the British Government in neglecting this fine art of the weaver. Only coarse blankets are produced now, and the wool is exported out of the State. For instance in 1926-27 wool to the extent of 40,016 maunds was exported, while the export of Bikaner woollen cloth amounted to only 479 maunds.

The efforts of the various provincial and State governments made during the last quarter of a century to revive the local industries have not touched the Government of Bikaner. There is no encouragement extended to this cottage industry and the department of Commerce and Industries have totally failed to take advantage of the present huge requirements of the British Government for army blankets which are being purchased in India by the lakhs.

The cotton weaving industry has similarly been neglected. The activities of the Khadi Bhandar, established in Bikaner city by the All-India Spinners' Association, with the object of reviving spinning and weaving, though not actively obstructed, as in the early years, are not encouraged.

Monopolies

On the other hand, for certain factory industries and businesses either the State is the monopolist, or grants monopolies to favourites including ministers, and the system works to the detriment of the consumers as well as labour. The cinema house in Bikaner city is the monopoly of the State. The power house and the waterworks are run by the State; and the supplies and charges are said to be arbitrarily fixed. The complaints of the consumers bear no fruit. For instance, house-owners were required to purchase

water meters, which had to be discarded after one year's use, as flat rates were then charged. Water rates are being increased from time to time and collected in advance for three months. If it is not paid on due date, interest at the rate of $12\frac{1}{2}\%$ is collected on the total for the quarter. Pipes are not laid inside the city wall, where the house-holder is obliged to pay Rs 15/- per month for a camel-load of water per day, while pipe water would cost him only Rs 3/- There is also wastage of public money due to the electrical staff being untrained and inefficient. It is said that between February and May 1940 four of the transformers were burnt out and not replaced. The accounts of the electric supply and the waterworks departments are not published. The wool-press is a monopoly which charges Rs 7/- per bale, while in Beawar and Fazilka Bangla in the province it is Rs 2|12/- The ice factory is another monopoly, and ice is sold at from one anna to two annas per seer, although the maximum price allowed by the State is $3\frac{1}{4}$ anna. Competition would reduce it to half an anna. Monopolies are bad enough anywhere, but they are a tyranny in every respect in a feudal State, where public voice in any matter is likely to come under the mischief of the Public Safety Act.

Labour Welfare

The State has no labour welfare laws. Nor has it accepted the Washington eight hours a day convention. It is not the intention of the State to comply with the International Labour Conventions, as is evident from the reservation made in the revised Instrument of Accession "that the regulation of labour shall be limited to the regulation of the safety of labour in mines and

oil-fields." It has already been pointed out how any organization of labour is impossible because of the Bikaner Public Safety Act. In consequence, there is no labour union, not even a railway workers' union. A recent case shows the injustice done to this class. The labourers of the power house and electricians' staff, in a joint application to the authorities, protested against long hours of work with no interval for meals. The men were immediately dismissed, and new men brought in from Jaipur and other places. The position is more or less the same in the wool-pressing, cotton-ginning and other factories. In the absence of unions, the labourers are at the mercy of the employers, many of whom took advantage of the wholesale unemployment during the three famine years and reduced the wages at a time when the employers in the provinces were compelled to grant dearness allowance for the war period.

Efforts of the People in Nation-building Work

The Khadi Bhandar is the only constructive national work undertaken by the people. It was established about five years ago in Bikaner City by the All-India Spinners' Association. The goods that this institution deals in are hand-spun and hand-woven khadi from Jaipur, Karauli and Andhra and silk from Bengal and Kashmir. The sales are considerable in spite of many handicaps. The import duty on silk is one anna per rupee of invoice value, and on cotton khadi from Rs. 2/- to Rs. 12/- per maund according to quality. The untrained customs staff sometimes charge Rs. 2/- for a particular count, which is assessed at Rs. 4/8/- at other times. The Khadi Bhandar has also been instrumental in exporting hand-spun and hand-woven Bikaner woollen goods worth Rs. 35,000 during the period of its existence. The

sales are on the up-grade since the Maharaja abolished the export duty on woollen goods in 1937. It is to the credit of the workers connected with this institution that the white Gandhi cap has established itself in the State. Patience and perseverance finally disarmed the suspicions of the police.

Relief of famine-stricken persons and of cattle is another piece of work undertaken by the people. The Rajputana Famine Relief Committees of Calcutta and Bombay opened depots in many centres in the State, afforded help to the needy, sold imported provisions and fodder at cost price, and fed thousands of people every day from a common kitchen in Bikaner City. In some places cattle were taken care of, and thousands saved. All of this work was continued for two years ending July 1940. For the first time in this kind of humanitarian activity, spinning and weaving were introduced, and needy people were thereby given an opportunity to work for their bread instead of depending on charity. It would be well for charitable societies and workers to bear this in mind for the future, and to revive spinning and weaving and other suitable village industries, while performing their humanitarian task.

CHAPTER VIII

PATTADAR SYSTEM

The study thus far has been concerned mostly with the Government of Bikaner in their relation to the entire population in the matter of civil and criminal administration, but only to a third of the population as far as land revenue is concerned. This latter, along with many an ancillary matter in two-thirds of the area, is the realm of the jagirdars, or pattadars, as they are called in Bikaner. Barring the power of life and death, these pattadars are the lords and masters of the people under them; and in dealing with them they often act with impunity against the laws of the land. The inhabitants of the patta villages are therefore worse off in many ways than their brothers in the khalsa area.* Most of the pattadars are related to the house of Bikaner, and are styled nobles or Tazimi Sardars, whose prestige the government of the Maharaja must maintain. Otherwise, they might rebel again, as they did as late as the first decade of the 20th century. The energies, formerly expended in revolts against the Maharaja's authority, now find a convenient safety valve in oppressing their people.

Income of the Tazimi Sardars

One hundred and thirty of these sardars own

* The 'Patta' in Rajputana and Central India should not be confused with the 'Patta' in Eastern and South India, where it is understood as a record of rights for the individual cultivator's holding. In the former case it signifies 'jagir' or 'inam' of one or more villages granted by the ruler. While 'khalsa' area is the portion in which the tenant pays direct to the Government of the State; and there is no middleman.

11,115,500 acres of land in 1,445 villages out of 2,742 in the State. Statistics regarding this patta area are not available to the State authorities. But, Sodhi Hukm Singh in his "Physical and Political Geography of Bikaner" gives a table from which it is found that the total income of all these pattas in 1894 was Rs 6,96,559, while their revenue payable to the State treasury was fixed permanently at Rs 1,67,795-13-6 in lieu of the military services formerly required of them. This latter amount must have been enhanced in later years, as the Administration Report for 1935-36 gives the tribute demand as Rs 3,09,049-13-9. Forty-seven of these pattas are entirely free grants. No settlement has taken place in the pattas. The pattadars have been frequently enhancing rents arbitrarily, and the present rate is twice that in khalsa area. We have found previously that the land revenue of the State, that is, of the khalsa area, has increased by 132% in fifty years. It is therefore fair to estimate that the total income of all the pattas from land rent alone is in the neighbourhood of thirty lakhs of rupees, and yet many of them are always in arrears with regard to the payment of the small revenue to the State treasury. At the end of the year 1935-36 one hundred and thirteen of the pattas were under court of wards management by the State due to indebtedness or mismanagement.

They were required in their original charters * to collect their revenues at reasonable rates (Hisabi) and to keep the rayats happy. But, as will be seen presently, they know only to enhance rents and to make their rayats unhappy. They provide neither schools nor hospitals, nor places of congregation for the community, nor playgrounds.

* Physical and Political Geography of Bikaner by Sodhi Hukm Singh. P. 104.

for children, nor kunds, nor bowlis (underground storage for water).

Patta of Mahajan

We shall take this patta as an instance to show the condition of the people living under this double feudal system. The pattadar, Raja Bhopal Singh wields such power in his territory that his rayats consider him as the *ardh-raj* (half a king) of the State. He enhances rents as he likes and exacts many kinds of illegal cesses which are not customary in khalsa area. Some of these are:

1. "Mapa" or a sales tax, of quarter anna per rupee of the value of goods brought by a trader into the village. When it is sold to a villager, the same tax is collected a second time both from the buyer as well as from the seller. There is collection every time the goods change hands. If one fails to pay the cess in three days, the levy is doubled. A recent case was that of a bania who brought a new Singer sewing machine into a village and paid the tax. After some time he sold it as second-hand for Rs. 30|-, but refused to pay the $7\frac{1}{2}$ annas demanded. The pattadar doubled it and sued for 15 annas, and the munsif decreed the amount. The Maharaja had once given the decision that such "mapa" may be levied only once. Such collection has therefore the sanction of the Maharaja. This tax, it may be mentioned, is in addition to the customs duty levied by the Government of Bikaner.

2. "Khunta-Pherai", a tax on sale of cattle, collected from the seller.

3. Sales tax on grass, ghee, etc.

4. "Lag" or forced contribution collected on the occasion of every marriage in the pattadar's family.

5 A collection of from four to five rupees per marriage in the tenant's family.

6 Collection of Rs 2½- per cent interest per month on outstanding rents

7 Collection of rents and all other cesses during the last three years' famine, although the Maharaja has ordered the stoppage of all litigation and collection of dues With the help of the Nazim and the Tahsildar the pattadar forcibly collects every kind of due, and many families have left the State on hizrat for Jaipur, Bahawalpur and the Punjab Some are even externed with the help of the State authorities These are well-known to the Maharaja's government.

Memorial to the Maharaja

Referring to these excessive exactions and to tenants' rights over their lands, hundreds of them from thirty villages in Patta Mahajan submitted a pathetic appeal * to the Maharaja in 1939 The Revenue Minister called them and declared that the cesses and *lags* existing at the time of pattadar's predecessor and some enhancement in rent effected by the present pattadar would remain in force, and all the rest would no longer be collected But, shortly afterwards at the due time for collection, the pattadar, with the help of the Nazim and the Tahsildar, forcibly collected the same cesses and *lags* and the enhanced rent Later, some fifty families were externed from the patta These externees took shelter in Bikaner city wherefrom they were driven away. They went to Jodhpur, and here also shelter was denied to them It is no wonder that the people in the patta as well as outside have conferred the title of *ardh-raj* on the pattadar

* See Appendix E

Full redress of the grievances has not been effected, but the Maharaja is said to have ordered that some redress be called for; however, it has been further ordered that the prestige of the pattadar must be maintained. It is interesting to note that Colonel Raja Bhupal Singhji of Mahajan is an honorary Aide-de-camp to the Maharaja.*

No Pasture Ground in the Pattas

It is significant that in none of the pattas of the pattadars, thikanedars and jagirdars is there any mention of provision of grazing lands for the benefit of the tenants' cattle. In consequence, the opportunities for impounding cattle and collecting penalties are many.

Forced Labour

Some years ago the Maharaja abolished all kinds of *begar* (forced labour). Consequently this pernicious system of forced labour is not prevalent in the khalsa area, except that some petty officials at times stealthily exact forced labour for carrying luggages. But, in all patta, jaigir and thikana areas plenty of forced labour for all sorts of purposes is still prevalent.

In addition to the tazimi pattadars the State maintains a large number of jagirdars and thikanedars, all of whom are merely middlemen living on the labour of the tillers of the land. Their position is comparable to the taluqdars and zamindars of the United Provinces, Bihar, Bengal and Orissa.

CHAPTER IX

SYSTEM OF LAND TENURE

Bikaner, as already noted, is divided into one-third khalsa area, that is, directly under the State Government, and two-thirds patta, jagir and thikanana area. Barring the forty-one villages in Tibi Pargana, granted by the Government of India as a reward for services rendered in the mutinies of 1857 and some *bhumiya* tenures, nowhere has the actual cultivator of the land any rights over his lands. He is tenant at will, and can be ejected even after possession of the land during five generations. The system of land tenure therefore is concerned with the nature of the grants to the various classes of grantees. The following is an outline of the system that prevails in Bikaner.

I Khalsa lands. There has been no settlement of these lands. The occupiers are tenants at will. Rent and other Government taxes, such as *bhoonga* (grazing tax) and *neota* (assessment for marriage in the raj family) are collected by Tahsildars.

(a) Rayatwari

(b) Khatedari—hereditary but not vested with proprietary rights

11 Direct Grants are of three kinds

(a) Tazimi Sardars

(b) Sardars

have the right of adoption

(c) Hazuri has no such right

III Jagirs are not hereditary. On the death of the Jagirdar, the jagir lapses to the State, but

It is ordinarily granted afresh, conditioned on loyalty to the Darbar. These jagirs are of four kinds:

- (a) Girassia raj—possession before the advent of Bikaji, the founder of the State.
- (b) Bhaibete—decendants of the raj family.
- (c) For unique services.
- (d) Parsangi
 - 1. Love and friendship
 - 2. Marriage
 - 3. Relation
 - 4. Unique services.

IV. Tribute villages were formerly auctioned to the highest bidder. It is of two kinds:

- (a) Be-talab—without any revenue demand in consideration of unique services.
- (b) Talab—with a revenue demand.
 - 1. Permanent settlement at one-third to the State and two-thirds to the grantee.
 - 2. In Samvat 1941 there was a Bandha—in the nature of a settlement for a number of years. In the case of any demand from the British Government on the State, these Bandhas have to pay proportionately.
 - 3. Without Bandha—the demand is not fixed.

V. Bhumiya tenure—held by the original inhabitants and tillers of the land before Bikaner was founded. Colonel Tod says that "even the lawless law cannot deprive them of this tenure."

- (a) Mafidars—do not pay a pie to the State.

(b) Those who make a nominal payment

All the above tenure-holders are the middlemen who enhance rents as they like and whenever they like, and collect all kinds of obnoxious taxes and cesses without conferring any corresponding benefit on their tenants. With solitary exceptions the pattas, jagirs, or thikanas are all held by Rajputs.

Sale of Occupancy Rights

When raj lands were sold to the Punjab colonists in the canal area, occupancy rights were also conferred on them. As already noted in the discussion of the budget, during recent years occupancy rights are being sold in certain localities to the old settlers. Particulars about these are not mentioned in the Administration Report, but if the sales of occupancy rights is to the old settlers, it seems a very unjust levy.

CHAPTER X

ECONOMIC CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE

The heavy increase in taxation and the addition of new taxes and other levies have been sufficiently dealt with in the previous pages. The ultimate result of all exactions is naturally found in the present economic condition of the people. We shall therefore now deal with some official statistics in order to appreciate the true picture of the 79% of the population supported by agriculture.

Economic Survey of the State*

In the census of 1931 an attempt was made to appraise the economic condition of the people, and statistics were collected by the Superintendent of Census through the revenue staff. The proportion of the different occupations was found to be as follows:

	%
Agriculture	79.0 ✓
Industrial (mines, industries, and transport)	8.0
Trade	3.6
State civil and military service	1.6
Liberal professions	1.5
Domestic service	2.0
Unproductive and unspecified	4.0

Average Yield of Crops

The principal kharif crops in the non-irrigated tahsils are *bajri*, *moth*, *mung*, *til*, and *gawar*.

* Census of India, 1931. Vol. I Bikaner State, Part I, Report
Published in Lucknow, 1934, pp. 129-147.

while the additional crops in the canal area are *jowar*, cotton and sugarcane. Two or three non-irrigated tahsils grow gram, barley, wheat, rape and mustard as rabi crops. While all of these are grown in the canal area under irrigation. The average yield of *bajri*, *moth* and *gawar* in the non-irrigated area is about one maund per bigha (= 0.625 acre), while in the canal area it is about four maunds. The yields of cotton, sugarcane, wheat, gram and barley in the canal area are respectively 5, 25, 5½, 7½ and 6 maunds per bigha. All of these yields, whether under dry conditions or under irrigation, are extremely poor in comparison with those in other parts of India. It is a wonder to people outside the State as to how the cultivators make both ends meet. Even with several subsidiary occupations they do not make the ends meet, but most of them are deep in debt, and large numbers of them are constantly leaving the State.

Family budget of Selected Cultivators

Family budgets for the year were collected, and considering, as the report states, "the danger of the cultivators understating their income and over-estimating their expenditure" care was taken to select cases of small and average holders, and one case from each of the Nizamats of Sadar, Sujangarh, Remi, Suratgarh and Ganganagar is reported in the table on page 138 of the census report. Some of the more important figures relevant for the purposes of this study are given below. Suratgarh and Ganganagar are the two Nizamats served by the Gang Canal, and the three others are dry areas. The report confesses that an inquiry of this kind conducted through census agency has its limitations, and the method of selecting an average case to represent a whole Nizamat is far from scientific.

However, the state of affairs revealed by even such official selection shows the uneconomic nature of the agricultural operations, and the heavy debts under which the cultivators of the State are burdened in order to keep body and soul together, and to bear the top-heavy administration.

Family budget of select cultivators in the various Nizamats.

Particulars	Sadar	Sujangarh	Reni	Suratgarh	Gangana- nagar
	A	B	C	D	E
Cultivator	6	3	5	3	7
Members in family.	2	1	3	2	2
Working members.					
Area of holding in bighas	80	130	150	45	101
Numbers of plough animals	1 camel	1 camel	1 camel	1 camel	2 camels and 2 bullocks
Other animals	1 cow & two buffa- loes	2 cows & two she- goats	1 buffalo & 1 calf	4 cows 1 buffalo 8 calves	2 cows, 4 calves, 1 mare & a foal
Subsidiary occupa- tion of self & other members...	Labour	Sale of firewood	Sale of ghee	Grazing animals, spinning, sale of ghee, plying camel on hire	Nil
Amount of debt in rupees	Nil	168	1,000	Nil	1,800
Annual agricultural income	Rs. 200	150	200	100	375
Annual agricultural expenditure (seeds, cattle, raqam or rent)	Rs. 56	54	45	76	450
Margin for food and clothing	Rs. 144	96	155	24	-75
i. Food	Rs. 120	80	120	50	120
ii. Clothing	Rs. 30	10	30	40	100

Particulars	Sadar	Sujangarh	Reni	Suratgarh	Gangana- nagar
Actual family ex- penditure	Rs 150	90	150	90	220
Profit or loss from agricultural work	Rs -6	+6	+5	-66	-295
Income from other sources	Rs 100	20	50	150	nil
Margin after making up agricultural losses	Rs 94	26	55	84	295
Extraordinary expen- diture in marriage death litigation	Rs. nil	300	nil	900	105
Net position after year's working	Rs +94	274	+55	-816	-400
Debt position at end of year	Rs nil	442	1 000	816	2 200

It may be said in explanation that the plough animals are sufficient in each case for tillage of the holding. The cultivator himself does the whole work with seasonal assistance from the other members of the family, but no wages have been charged to expenditure. Instead of depreciation on plough animals the total cost of the added stock has been charged to expenditure. By distributing the cost of the plough animals over a period of twelve to fifteen years the loss sustained by D and E would be somewhat reduced. Even after making allowance for this discrepancy the official figures prove that the cultivator has no profit from agriculture in a good year, and has to make up his losses by his income from subsidiary occupations. He has hardly anything left to meet the expenses connected with a marriage or death, and goes deeper and deeper into debt. This being the situation in the khalsa area, one can well imagine what a greater hardship it must be for the cultivator in the patta area, where he has to pay many more exactions and perform forced labour for the pattadar or the jagirdar without any payment for a good part of the year.

CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSION

Bikaner, like many another State in Rajputana, is a full-fledged feudal State with its Maharaja as the autocrat at the top, his near relations as rajvis, many male collatorals of the house of Bikaner as tazim pattadars and other jagirdars and thikanedars, all enjoying huge estates worth an annual income of thirty lakhs of rupees at the minimum and paying a permanently fixed *rekh* of a little over three lakhs per annum. This payment is in lieu of military services which they were previously required to render to the Maharaja. The Government of Bikaner owns only one-third of the area of the State, called *khalsa*, while the feudal nobles under the Maharaja are the masters of the remaining two-thirds.)

Bikaner was founded nearly five centuries ago by Bikaji, a son of Rao Jodha of Jodhpur, by conquering the original peoples of the desert, the Bhattis, the Johiyas and other pastoral tribes, the Jats having surrendered voluntarily on condition that their political rights and privileges would be preserved inviolable. One hundred years later, about the last quarter of the sixteenth century, the Jats however disappeared from the political arena to make room for the over-abundant Rajputs. After enjoying independence for a little over a century, Rao Rai Singh surrendered his freedom to Emperor Akbar, who conferred on him all the territories in the former's possession as a grant and appointed him a satrap in 1574. *Never since then has Bikaner exercised the powers*

of sovereignty The Mughal Court at Delhi de-throned the legitimate successor and put a pretender on the throne, or granted the State to the illegitimate son of a deceased Raja. At the time of British ascendancy, rebellions and invasions had entirely weakened the authority of Maharaja Surat Singh, who decided to seek help from the English and hurriedly entered into the treaty of 1818. Immediately afterwards British arms quelled the rebellion and drove the invaders away. The Maharaja thereby acknowledged his own subordinate position and the State has all along remained a vassal under the paramountcy of the British Government of India.

During the first three centuries of Rajput rule their rapacious and voracious nature had reduced the number of villages, towns and hamlets from the original two thousand and seven hundred to about half in the beginning of the nineteenth century. The growth was extremely slow during one and a quarter century of peace in the land, and it was only in the decade ending 1931 that the number reached two thousand seven hundred and forty-two. However, the economic condition of the people is, if anything, worse than in former times. It has deteriorated more rapidly in the present ruler's reign of forty years. The earlier rulers exacted money from the people to pay for warfare and to build palaces of gold and lacquer. While there are no wars now, the same basic idea is working in a more severe form. Per capita taxation has increased nearly five times in half a century. The idea, as of yore, is to increase the revenues in order to lavish money on palaces, to appropriate more for the privy purse of the Maharaja and to maintain a top-heavy administration, which is but a veneer to cover the real and old feudal system.

The people receive almost nothing in return for just the same as their forbears did in their day. 17.5% of the revenues is appropriated for Maharaja's privy purse, while only 0.3% is expended in primary education. This gives one primary school for every 108 square miles; and only forty-two out of every thousand of the population can read and write Hindi. Barring a few hospitals and dispensaries, there is provision neither for sanitation nor for veterinary service to the immense cattle population. Transport facilities are non-existent. Agriculture is neglected. Indigenous industries have no place in the scheme of things of the industries and commerce department, while the few factory industries are in the hands of monopolists who exploit primary producers, labour and consumers. In a desert country with uncertain rainfall, famine stalks the land every three or four years; but no permanent famine fund has been created. The continuous famine of the last three years has denuded the live-stock of the last and has driven large numbers of people from their homes to seek wages elsewhere. The heavy indebtedness of the agricultural population is the final reflection of the huge increases of the last half century in land revenue and other taxes and customs duties. Excise duties have increased by 45, 194%; and the excise policy of the State tends to enlarge consumption of intoxicants resulting in the devitalisation of the people. It is only the admirable patience and perseverance of the hardy denizens of the deesert that sustain them against all odds of nature as well as of man.

Only a third of the cultivable area of 4,156,442 acres in the khalsa section is under cultivation at present. With an equitable taxation and with

provision of facilities for the all-round growth of the people, the khalsa area alone can support three times the population it does now. Had the above conditions been favourable, there would have been natural growth in population between 1891 and 1931. In actual fact it decreased by 29.7% in 1901 due to a succession of famines, increased over the 1901 figure by 19.9%, and again went down by 5.9% in 1921. The increase of 41.9% in 1931 over 1921 is, to a very large extent, due to the establishment of the Gang Canal; and the immigrants from the Punjab swelled the increase of the decade. Between 1891 and 1931 the increase was only 12.5%. If we eliminate the immigrant population, there is no natural growth at all in forty years. Large numbers of families are unable to face the unfavourable conditions in the State, and have been forsaking their ancestral home and hearth to make a living in more favourable regions.

The various pattadars and thikanedars own 11,115,500 acres of land in 1,445 villages. Not much of it is under cultivation, to be certain. But they exact another large slice of the cultivators' income and oppress their people in multifarious ways almost with the sanction of the Maharaja's Government. A conservative estimate of their total net income from land rents alone comes to twenty-seven lakhs of rupees. These pattas and jagirs were necessary in the eighteenth century to protect the State against external foes. But their present owners serve no social purpose. From the point of view of the welfare of the people under them, these ex-military gentry are an unmitigated evil, and they deprive the State of at least twenty-seven lakhs of rupees which could be utilized in expanding the nation-building.

activities, and the honest labour both of the Government of the State, and of the people could turn the desert into a garden spot.

These conditions might have been righted by public opinion, if it could be ventilated. But the public voice has been effectively gagged by the enactment of the Bikaner Public Safety Act, which holds out the threat of martial law and court martials for a people who have long been disarmed and for a territory where violent rebellion is beyond one's imagination. Deportations and confiscation of properties have driven terror into the people. The Press Act militates against the publication of a newspaper or of a useful book or pamphlet. The Registration of Societies Act requires orphanages, widows' homes, homes for the infirm and the invalid and art and scientific societies to be registered, but affords no scope for political, labour or kisan organizations. Repression of civil liberties is so complete in the State that the people talk in whispers that they are living in a prison house. Only when they come outside, do they give vent to their repressed feelings; and some braver spirits among them unburden themselves in an occasional publication from Bombay, Delhi or Calcutta. This is an extremely unhealthy state of affairs in the State that takes pride in being the seventh largest in India.

The shrewdness of Maharaja Sir Ganga Singh and his continuous efforts to persuade the political officers that he should be left alone in the administration of his State finally succeeded in the abolition of the post of the resident Political Agent in Bikaner in 1909. His spotless loyalty to the Paramount Power even to the extent of going out of his way to advise the Viceroy as to how to

handle the civil disobedience movement in the provinces, the part he played in the passing of the Government of India Act of 1935, and the part he was destined to play in the Federation, all of these have combined to induce the British Government to shut their eyes to what is happening in Bikaner. Feudallism in the modern garb of law and order is having its run, the State has not incurred unnecessary debts, budgets are apparently balanced, there is no sign of rebellion, and peace prevails. Where is therefore the necessity for the Paramount Power to intervene? But, the system of inequitable taxation, of lavish expenditure on pleasures and palaces and of private amassing of wealth by the Maharaja, is steadily eating into the vitals of the primary producers of wealth and weighing them down heavier and heavier with debts. May it not soon be a case of killing the goose that lays the golden egg?

The bright political history of India during the last two decades is a great deal marred by the behind-the-purdah activities of the rulers of the Indian States, in all of which Bikaner has taken a large and leading part. While the leaders of the provinces were mobilizing the masses in order to create a united democratic India, the rulers not only muzzled their people, but had it statutorily fixed in the Government of India Act, 1935, so that natural growth of democracy in the States would be bottled up for ever. Further, the safeguards on their behalf incorporated in the Act, and those others they were still pressing for inclusion in the instrument of Accession, were such that the proposed Federation of India would never be a united India, but a conglomeration of five hundred and odd large and small units of various stages of political development having

hundreds of customs barriers, perpetuating the existing feudal system in the States and clinging to the apron strings of British imperialism for ever. The manipulations behind the scenes of these feudal chiefs of India and their utter lack of patriotism will remain a great reminder to the leaders of public opinion in the provinces that India is one and indivisible, and the progress of the provinces cannot be achieved piecemeal without a corresponding consideration given to the case of the ninety million people in the States.

Feudalism in India has long outlived its utility and has no place in the modern scheme of things. It is a bar against industrial and agricultural progress. It has been maintained so long in all its claptrap glory by British Imperialism in order to retain the latter's stranglehold on India. However, whether it is the autocracy of the Maharaja of Bikaner or the evils of the pattadar system it cannot be denied that 'a people have the government that they deserve.' No outside agency can help the people of Bikaner to remove these evils. It is the people of Bikaner themselves who have to go through sufferings and sacrifices, the same as the provinces and some States already have, before they can have a glimpse of the Bikaner that will be a garden spot, where they and their government will be ever prepared to successfully fight the rigours of the periodical famines, and where immigrants of the outer world will combine with the natives of the desert to turn it into a free and prosperous unit of India. It is a great objective to live and labour for, and the key to that door is in the hands of the people.

APPENDIX A

Treaty between the Honourable the East India Company and Maharaja Soorut Sing Bahadur the Raja of Bikaner, concluded by Mr. Charles Theophilus Metcalfe on the part of the Honourable Company, in virtue of full powers granted by His Excellency the most Noble the Marquis of Hastings, K G, Governor General etc, etc and by Oujha Kashee Nautt on the part of Raj Rajheesur Maharajah Sroomun Sree Soorut Sing Bahadur, according to full powers given by the Rajah—1818

Article 1

There shall be perpetual friendship, alliance and unity of interests between the Honourable Company and Maharajah Soorut Sing and his heirs and successors, and the friends and enemies of one party shall be the friends and enemies of both parties

Article 2.

The British Government engages to protect the principality and territory of Bikaner

Article 3

Maharajah Soorut Sing and his heirs and successors will act in subordinate co-operation with the British Government and acknowledge its supremacy, and will not have any connections with any other Chiefs or States

Article 4

The Maharajah and his heirs and successors will not enter into negotiation with any Chief or State without the knowledge and sanction of the British Government, but the usual amicable cor-

respondence with friends and relations shall continue.

Article 5

The Maharajah and his heirs and successors will not commit aggressions on anyone; if by accident any dispute arise with anyone the settlement of it shall be submitted to the arbitration and award of the British Government.

Article 6

Whereas certain persons of the principality of Bikaner have adopted the evil courses of highway robbers and banditti; and have plundered the property of many, to the great molestation of peaceable subjects of both of the contracting parties, the Maharajah engages to cause to be restored the property plundered from the inhabitants of the British territories up to this time, and for the future entirely to suppress the robbers and plunderers in his principality. If the Maharajah be not able to effect their suppression assistance shall be afforded on his application by the British Government, in which case the Maharajah will pay all the expenses of force employed; or, in the event of his not finding means to pay those expenses, he will in lieu cede parts of his territory to the British Government, which, after the payment of those expenses, shall be restored.

Article 7.

The British Government on the application of the Maharajah, will reduce to subjection the taukoors and other inhabitants of his principality who have revolted and thrown off his authority. In this case the Maharajah will pay all the expenses of the force employed; or, in the event of

not having the means, will, instead, cede parts of his territory to the British Government, which shall be restored after the payment of those expenses

Article 8

The Maharajah of Bikaner will furnish troops at the requisition of the British Government, according to his means

Article 9

The Maharajah and his heirs and successors shall be absolute rulers of their country, and the British jurisdiction shall not be introduced into that principality

Article 10

As it is the wish and the intention of the British Government that the roads of Bikaner and Bhutner be rendered passable and safe for the transit of trade to and from the countries of Cabul and Khorasaun, etc., the Maharajah engages effectually to accomplish that object within his own dominions, so as that merchants shall pass with protection and safety and meet with no impediment, and with respect to custom duties the established rates shall not be exceeded

Article 11

This Treaty of eleven Articles having been concluded and signed and sealed by Mr Charles Theophilus Metcalfe and Oujha Kashee Nautt, the ratifications by His Excellency the most Noble the Governor-General and Raj Rajheesur Maharajah Sroomun Sree Soorut Sing Bahadoor, shall be exchanged within twenty days from the present date

Done at Delhi this 9th day of March, A.D. 1818.

(Sd.) C. T. Metcalfe

L. S.

(Sd.) Oujha Kashee Nautt

L. S.

(Sd.) Hastings.

This Treaty was ratified by His Excellency the Governor-General, in camp, near Patrassa Ghaut on the Gogra, on the 21st of March 1818.

(Sd.) J. Adam,

Secretary to the Governor-General.

APPENDIX B

CONFIDENTIAL

BIKANER,

No 160-P

7th December 1905.

My Dear Maharaja,

Will you kindly refer to the correspondence ending with Your Highness' letter of 17th October, 1905, forwarding your representation in the Bikaner Pattedars case? The final orders of the Government of India in the case have now been received which I communicate below for your Highness' information

After a reconsideration of the case the Governor-General in Council is now pleased to modify the orders contained in the Foreign Department's letter of the 7th September, 1905 Lord Curzon while retaining the opinion expressed in the letter above referred to, that Your Highness acted in some of the cases concerned with a severity in excess of the deserts, was willing—matters having gone as far as they have—to support the authority of Your Highness, but I have been desired to express the very strongest hope that Your Highness will exercise your personal clemency towards the Thakurs, not in any indefinite way, but in the manner which the Government of India only refrained with the utmost difficulty from introducing into their orders of the 7th September last

Punishments so severe as those meted out by Your Highness would never be inflicted in British territory, and as some discrimination should be shown in the punishment awarded to the Thakurs, the following modifications have been suggested by the Government of India for the consideration of Your Highness —

a) In the case of Thakur Bhairun Singh, who was not only the ring-leader in the present disturbance, but took part himself in the rebellion of 1883, the punishment of confiscation may be allowed to stand, although it will be for Your Highness to consider, in the light of the Thakur's future behaviour, whether so much as half of his estates should be resumed.

(b) The culpability of Thakur Hukam Singh who was a child when his father participated in the rebellion of 1883 is less grave, and the sentence of confiscation of the village of Mormasar might be remitted at the expiration of the period of three years, when the rest of the Bidasar Patta is restored.

(c) In the case of Thakur Ram Singh, whose family had no connection with the events of 1883, the confiscation of the village of Sulkhania is clearly a punishment in excess of his present offence and the sentence might be remitted after a period of one year and the village placed under the management of the Court of Wards like the rest of the Patta.

In thus remitting the ultimate decision in the matter to Your Highness, Lord Curzon, as almost his last official act in India, was reposing a confidence in Your Highness which His Excellency is convinced, will be justified.

In conclusion I have to remark, with regard to the penultimate paragraph of this letter, that the Hon. the Agent to the Governor-General is.

APPENDIX B

CONFIDENTIAL

BIKANER,

No 160-P

7th December 1905.

My Dear Maharaja,

Will you kindly refer to the correspondence ending with Your Highness' letter of 17th October, 1905, forwarding your representation in the Bikaner Pattedars case? The final orders of the Government of India in the case have now been received which I communicate below for your Highness' information

After a reconsideration of the case the Governor-General in Council is now pleased to modify the orders contained in the Foreign Department's letter of the 7th September, 1905 Lord Curzon while retaining the opinion expressed in the letter above referred to, that Your Highness acted in some of the cases concerned with a severity in excess of the deserts, was willing—matters having gone as far as they have—to support the authority of Your Highness, but I have been desired to express the very strongest hope that Your Highness will exercise your personal clemency towards the Thakurs, not in any indefinite way, but in the manner which the Government of India only refrained with the utmost difficulty from introducing into their orders of the 7th September last

Punishments so severe as those meted out by Your Highness would never be inflicted in British territory, and as some discrimination should be shown in the punishment awarded to the Thakurs, the following modifications have been suggested by the Government of India for the consideration of Your Highness —

(a) In the case of Thakur Bhairun Singh, who was not only the ring-leader in the present disturbance, but took part himself in the rebellion of 1883, the punishment of confiscation may be allowed to stand, although it will be for Your Highness to consider, in the light of the Thakur's future behaviour, whether so much as half of his estates should be resumed.

(b) The culpability of Thakur Hukam Singh who was a child when his father participated in the rebellion of 1883 is less grave, and the sentence of confiscation of the village of Mormasar might be remitted at the expiration of the period of three years, when the rest of the Bidasar Patta is restored.

(c) In the case of Thakur Ram Singh, whose family had no connection with the events of 1883, the confiscation of the village of Sulkhanian is clearly a punishment in excess of his present offence and the sentence might be remitted after a period of one year and the village placed under the management of the Court of Wards like the rest of the Patta.

In thus remitting the ultimate decision in the matter to Your Highness, Lord Curzon, as almost his last official act in India, was reposing a confidence in Your Highness which His Excellency is convinced, will be justified.

In conclusion I have to remark, with regard to the penultimate paragraph of this letter, that the Hon. the Agent to the Governor-General is

assured that Your Highness will show yourself worthy of the confidence reposed in you by the Government of India.

With kindest regards,

Yours very sincerely,

(Sd.) A. F. Bruce.

To

Major His Highness

Maharaja Sir Ganga Singh Bahadur,

K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E., A.-D.-C.

APPENDIX C.

BIKANER,
RAJPUTANA,

Private

The 18th December, 1899.

My Dear Captain Bayley,

I am having the note about Mool Chand's case prepared and when ready will send it with the petition. Also the case of Lekh Ram.

No. I don't personally mind at all your asking about these people's cases when they petition you, as there is nothing to hide but I must say it is quite new to me and I am not accustomed to it. Since I got my powers in December 1898 and till Colonel Vincent went away in August last I don't think there was a single case in which Colonel Vincent sent the man's petition to us for report. He sent them for disposal only. You can look this up in your office records and he hardly ever asked me about any case either. He often told me that he had confidence in me and did not want to hear anything about such cases and that he wanted to leave me alone. Of course I always consulted him in important matters. I am certain Colonel Vincent too must have had a lot of petitions complaining against me, but I know he never sent them to us. There are always heaps of low subordinates in the Police, etc., who are by no means good and honest and I have constant bother with them, and I think I might be trusted to deal with them without doing any intentional injustice to them or interference. I don't know how far I am right, but I think that when a chief has got full powers, he ought to be let alone and not interfered with in such small

ordinary cases I don't mean to say you have at all *interfered* with any of my cases and have asked for the file of late Jamadar Lekh Ram. You said he hadn't appealed to me or the Council and wanted to see the file of the Appeal Court. If the man had any wrong done to him, he has still got the two highest Courts in the State to ask for redress. If you now saw the file (not that I am not going to send it to you, I am only going through it myself first) and made suggestions and of course they would have to be followed, but if you had left his case to us to see we would have done it equally justly. I hope you won't get offended at my expressing myself so freely but in *Private* with Colonel Vincent I always made a point (which I think is very straightforward) of always telling him what I thought even though I disagreed with him, and unless you ask me not to do so, I will follow the same principle with you.

What my whole meaning is is this, that the low class of servants in this State,—the majority of them at any rate—are the very worst type you can find anywhere and if on getting petitions from any of them you always asked for notes etc., it would of course be an awful bother. Hardly a day goes past when I don't hear of some Police (or other Department) villainy or other and if you ask on each case the people who petition *do get to know of it* through your clerks or mine and it puts their backs up and even if you don't interfere it in a way upsets my authority. I mean they know I can't do anything very much myself without your asking an explanation. That's the gist of my whole letter.

Colonel Vincent himself was *very* particular about this and he *never* allowed *anything* I had

128
done to be discussed even in the most casual manner before him by anyone, anywhere and I know this for a fact.

I have spoken all this to you more as to a friend than to a Political Agent and I hope you will agree that I did right in telling you what I had in my mind instead of keeping it there.

Excuse scratch but am sending. Can't re-copy.

Yours ever,
(Sd.) Ganga Singh.

P.S.

So far you have been petitioned mostly by outsiders. There are lots of Bikaneris who are discontented and they too if they find out anything like this, will begin.

Y Ganga Singh.

APPENDIX D.

BIKANER RESIDENCY,

19th December 1899.

My Dear Ganga Singh,

I have read your letter written yesterday evening about petitions and I must say I am rather surprised, though of course I am very glad that you should express yourself freely and say what you think. I am sorry, however, to find that you so absolutely misunderstand my action in asking about these petitions and that you also appear to misunderstand the position of a Political Agent generally towards his Durbar. Nothing is further from my mind than interference with your orders, and I trust that there will never be any greater need than there is now for even contemplating such interference. It is however the duty of every Political Agent to satisfy himself that the State with which he is, is well and justly governed, or how it is governed, and he can only do this by occasionally asking for reports on selected petitions. I consider (I may say that as this is the fourth Agency I have held and I have also seen a lot of work in the Agent to the Governor-General's Office and the Foreign Office, I am not without experience) that a Political Agent who merely forwards every petition he gets to the Durbar for disposal, and never tries to find out what the facts are, is not doing his work and earning his pay. Colonel Vincent may have done this, but then his long experience of Bikaner may have justified him in taking everything on trust. I have not that experience. But as you have mentioned Colonel Vincent I may perhaps tell you without breach of confidence that Colonel Vincent before leaving Bikaner left it on record that the success of your administration caused him grave anxiety on one point, and that was your inclination to be-

too hard on outsiders employed in the State. I should of course not think of allowing orders to be discussed before me, but asking for information on cases of which I am ignorant is a different thing and the reason why in two cases I asked you for information direct is that you appeared not to like my doing so through mine and Dewan's Office. In Lekh Ram's case I asked you for the file as the most convenient way of getting at the case and as causing you least trouble. I am not in the least keen on seeing the file if you would sooner not show it to me and a note on the case would do just as well. As for making suggestions I should of course not dream of doing such a thing at the present stage.

If I disregard all petitions, the only result will be that petitions will go up to the Agent to the Governor-General and on to the Government of India, and the Political Agent here will be asked officially to report on their grievances, which will of course involve his calling for reports from the Durbar.

It is I assure you no uncommon thing to call for information in respect of complaints from subjects of Native States, from the biggest Durbars in India and where Chiefs have held their powers for years. When I was in Foreign Office, I have seen and signed plenty of letters asking Agents to the Governor-General and Residents to procure such reports. Asking for reports officially, must of course be known to the office clerks, but even if they tell the petitioners no great harm is done. The petitioners very soon learn that no action is ever taken by the Political Officers in their case, unless they have really been treated with flagrant injustice. Here, of course, there is no question of injustice at all, as I fully recognise that your endeavours are all aimed at ruling:

justly and well and that if you are occasionally severe it is because you consider the lower class of State servants to be mostly the worst type you can find anywhere (a somewhat sweeping opinion I may observe and one which you will I trust find reason to modify in years to come) Moreover I have been trying my best to avoid even letting the office know that information in cases is being asked for by applying to you direct All my office know is that I am keeping such and such a file in my room and there is no need for your office to know that information has been asked for by me unless you tell them It is a simple matter for you to ask for such information for yourself and then let me have it I say all this because I wish you to understand that I have been trying to act with special consideration for your wishes If a Political Agent had been sent here with no previous experience of Bikaner and who had not had the advantage of knowing you, and of hearing you from Colonel Vincent and Mr Martindale personally he might and probably would have asked for reports officially on many petitions whereas I have only taken notice of three I hope I have said enough to show you that your complaints about my proceedings are not quite fair but if you wish to be further convinced I shall only be too glad to refer the whole matter to Mr Martindale and obtain his opinion You must remember that though I have the pleasure of being your personal friend I am also your Political Agent and as such have duties to perform of which I and my superior officers are the only judges and which cannot be neglected even though they unfortunately clash with your notions of what a Political Agent ought to do

Your sincerely,

(Sd) S. F Bayley.

APPENDIX E.

To

His Highness the Maharaja,

Bikaner State,

Bikaner.

May it please your Highness,

With due respect and humble submission, we the residents of Patta Mahajan beg to lay the following few lines for your Highness' favourable consideration and proper justice:—

(1) That your Highness' humble petitioners, anyhow managed to pay up to this time the *Raqam* (rent) although it was excessive. But owing to the draught in successive years, we could produce hardly sufficient for our subsistence; how then can we pay the ever-increasing *Raqam* and *Lags* (cesses and levies other than rent).

(2) That the present rate of *Raqam* and *Lag* has become so excessive that we are not able to pay the amount. The *Lags* which are at present realised are given below:—

- (a) *Khunta Phirai* is demanded in village.
- (b) Fourth-share is demanded on the sale of grass, *Lasu*, *Bankra*, etc.
- (c) Eleven rupees are realised from the man who plucks *Loong* (branches) of *Khejri*.
- (d) Cattle from outside are allowed to stay in *patta* and thereby the *Assamis* are put to loss.
- (e) If our cattle go astray and enter into another village of the *patta*, they are

sent to catching house They are not released from catching house till they pay the freshly introduced tax "*Bhoonga*" * Consequently sometimes the charges exceed the cost of the cattle and hence they are put to sale In this way many times a cattle enters a catching house, so that many times the said "*Bhoonga*" is demanded

- (f) That we are not given the receipt of the amount which we pay to the *patta* employees
- (g) That the rent has been enhanced and who do not consent to pay the enhanced rate are put to great loss so much so that they are externed from the village
- (h) That there are other newly created *Lags* and cesses which the *Assamis* are unable to pay

(3) That owing to the bad harvest in last five years and complete draught this year, we Your Highness' poor subjects are hardly able to provide their family and consequently not able to pay enhanced *Raqam* and *Lags* and cesses

(4) That your Highness' poor subjects applied to the Revenue Minister, Bikaner State under Notification No 38 of 1923, for an enquiry and if the *Raqam* and *Lags* and cesses were found excessive, they may be reduced according to the quality of the land the nature of the foodstuffs, etc But owing to our ill-luck our petition was not favourably considered

(5) Now, we pray to Your Highness for redressing our grievances so that we may be able to

pay the *Raqam* and *Lags* with facility after providing our families. Your Highnesses' fatherly affection towards his beloved subjects has imbued in us the spirit of loyalty, and we have come from such a long distance to pray and get our grievances removed.

We hope Your Highness will get an enquiry made into the matter.

For this act of kindness we shall ever pray for Your Highness' long life and prosperity.

We beg to remain,

Your Highness' most loyal subjects,
Asamis of Patta Mahajan.

VILLAGES

(1) Bhograsar. (2) Hindor. (3) Hatusar. (4) Kakralia. (5) Jagor. (6) Chadasar. (7) Bhopal-pura. (8) Govindsar. (9) Bakhtawarpura. (10) Hangrasar. (11) Khanisar. (12) Jaswantsar. (13) Bachrara. (14) Ratnigar. (15) Harisinghpura. (16) Rambag. (17) Pipasar. (18) Phalagi. (19) Rampura. (20) Udupur. (21) Bhojigar. (22) Kharya. (23) Surjansar. (24) Ata. (25) Likhmisar. (26) Baladasar. (27) Ranigar. (28) Ramsara. (29) Asrasar. (30) Jagchinpura.

Signatures and thumb impressions:

Taru Jat

Mukana

Ganesh Gadar

Bhagu Jat

Jagmal

Sirdari

Sapali

Muli Jat

and others.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 1 Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan or the Central and Western Rajput States of India, by Lieut -Col James Tod, Edited with Introduction and Notes by William Crooke, C I E , in three volumes (Oxford University Press, 1920)
- 2 History of Bikaner in Hindi by Sohan Lal, Additional Member, Regency Council and Revenue Officer, State Bikaner, Published about 1894
- 3 Physical and Political Geography of Bikaner with historical notes by Rai Bahadur Sodhi Hukm Singh, Vice President of the Regency Council, Published, 1894
- 4 Official Writings of Mountstuart Elphinstone, Edited by Forrest, Published London 1884
- 5 The Rajputana Gazetteer, Vol I Published by the Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, Calcutta 1879
- 6 A Personal Narrative of a Journey through Bikaner, Jodhpur and Jaisalmer by Lieut A H E Boileau, printed at the Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, 1837
- 7 Treaties, Engagements and Sanads relating to India and neighbouring countries by Sir Charles Aitchison Vol III
- 8 Government of India, Foreign Department Reports on the Political Administration of the Rajputana States and Ajmer-Merwara for the years 1900-1901, 1901-1902 and 1902-1903

- 9 Notes—Indian States Committee; Questions connected with Treaty Relations (Prime Minister, Bikaner State). Printed at the Government Press, Bikaner, 1928.
- 10 Confidential Report of the Constitutional Committee of the Chamber of Princes. Printed at the Hindusthan Times Press, Delhi, 1937.
- 11 Census of India, 1931, Vol. I. Bikaner State, Part I. Report compiled by Rai Bahadur D. M. Nanavati, B.A., LL.B., Superintendent, Census Operations, Bikaner State. Printed at the Newal Kisore Press, Lucknow, 1934.
- 12 Report on the Administration of the Bikaner State for 1935-36, Published by Authority. Printed at the Government Press, Bikaner.
- 13 Budget of the Government of Bikaner (in Hindi) for the year 1939-40.
- 14 Bikaner Legislative Assembly Proceedings, 1929-30 session.
- 15 Bikaner Legislative Assembly Proceedings, 1938-39 session.
- 16 The Bikaner Public Safety Act of 1932 in Hindi.
- 17 The Bikaner Public Safety Act (Amendment) Bill, introduced by Mr. G. T. Hamilton Harding.
- 18 The Registration of Societies Act of 1930, Bikaner, (in Hindi).
- 19 Speech delivered by the Maharaja of Bikaner at the public Durbar in Ganga Nivas,

STATES PEOPLES' CONFERENCE SERIES

Old Series (Selected)

1. The Problem of Indian States
By P. L. Chudgar.
2. Congress Policy Towards States.
3. Peep into Hyderabad.
4. Memorandum of the Indian States
Peoples' Conference, 1928.

New Series

1. Indictment of Patiala.
2. Orissa States Inquiry Report.
3. What are the Indian States ?
4. Lawless Limbdi.
5. Ratlam.